

# Hepatitis D

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This is  
what you  
need  
to know

# Hepatitis D – Liver Facts

## Where is your liver?



Your liver is found on the right at the top of your belly (abdomen) underneath your ribs. You only have one liver.

## How big is your liver?



It is the biggest organ in your body and weighs about 1.5 kilograms (about the same size as a pineapple).

## Why is your liver important?



The liver has lots of different jobs – these are just some of the most important ones.



**Fights infection** by helping to kill bacteria.



**Helps blood clot.** Makes chemicals that help you to heal after an injury or cut.



**Helps digest fats.** Makes a yellowgreen liquid called bile which helps digest fats in your intestine.



**Stores important chemicals** such as iron, vitamins and minerals, which your body needs to stay healthy.



**Stores energy.** Sugar, a source of energy for when our body needs it, is stored in the liver as glycogen.

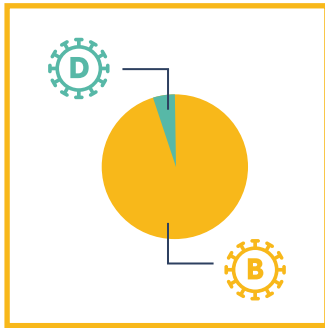


**Cleans the blood.** Takes poisons and drugs (including things like alcohol and caffeine) out of the blood and breaks them down, so they are not harmful to us anymore.

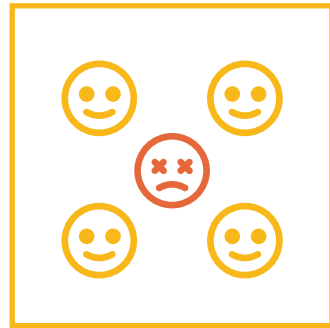
# Hepatitis D – How common is it?

- ▶ Most people with hepatitis do not know they are infected – it is hard to detect without proper testing by a doctor.

**Hepatitis B is the most common type of hepatitis infection worldwide.** The risk of liver disease and liver cancer is **3× higher** for people infected with both hepatitis B and hepatitis D.



5 in 100 people infected with hepatitis B are also infected with hepatitis Delta (D).



1 in 5 people with chronic hepatitis D/B infection die from complications of the disease.



**There is no vaccine against HDV**, however vaccination against HBV, in people who are not already infected with HBV, prevents HDV.

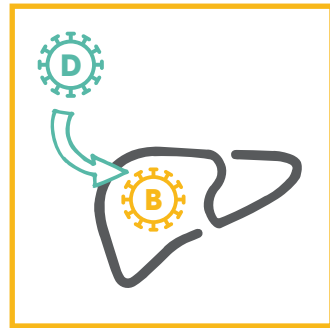
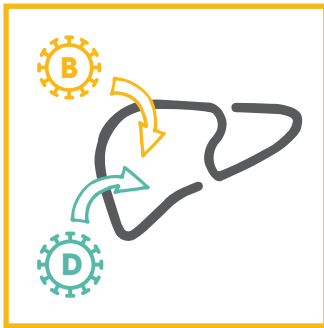
# Hepatitis D – How does it cause infection?

- ▶ The hepatitis B virus is needed to help the hepatitis D virus infect liver cells.

Hepatitis D virus is a unique virus that steals the machinery of the hepatitis B virus to make its own outer coat so it can infect liver cells. Hepatitis B virus is therefore referred to as a helper virus and hepatitis D as a satellite virus.

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There are two different ways a person can be infected with hepatitis D, called co-infection and superinfection.



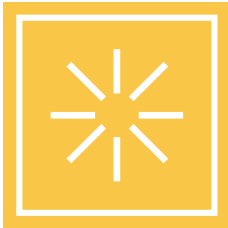
**Co-infection** occurs when a person becomes infected with both hepatitis D and hepatitis B **at the same time**. Most people recover from the severe, acute symptoms of a coinfection, and both viruses go away. However, about 5 in 100 people with a co-infection will develop chronic infections that do not go away.

**Superinfection** occurs when a person already has **chronic hepatitis B** and then becomes **infected with hepatitis D**. Symptoms of superinfection may be acute. A superinfection usually causes a person to develop chronic hepatitis D in addition to chronic hepatitis B.

# Hepatitis D –

## Types of infection

- ▶ Being infected with hepatitis D can cause an acute infection which progresses to a chronic infection in certain patients.



**Acute hepatitis D is a short-lasting infection.** Symptoms are similar to other types of hepatitis infections but can be more severe. **Your body can sometimes fight off an acute hepatitis D infection** on its own, and the virus goes away.



**Chronic hepatitis D is a long-lasting infection.** You may develop severe liver problems **if you have chronic hepatitis B and D because your body cannot fight off the virus on its own.** Chronic hepatitis D is the most severe form of viral hepatitis, which can quickly lead to problems such as severe liver scarring (cirrhosis), liver cancer, liver failure and maybe even death.

# Hepatitis D – Lifestyle Changes

► If you're living with hepatitis D, you may want to make some lifestyle changes to help your liver stay as healthy as possible.

## Reduce or stop alcohol and drug use



Alcohol and drug use can cause **further damage to your liver.**



To help keep your liver as healthy as possible, try to stop or **cut down on alcohol and/or drug use.**



**Talk to your doctor** if you want to stop but are finding it difficult.

## Eat a healthy, balanced diet



**Drink plenty of water** to help your body fight infections and keep your liver healthy.



**Avoid fizzy drinks** (e.g. cola, lemonade and energy drinks). These contain lots of sugar.



**Try to keep a healthy weight.** Eating too much or too little will have a bad effect on your liver.\*



**Avoid foods high in fat, salt and sugar** as they can make your liver work harder and cause weight gain.

\* To maintain a healthy weight, eat plenty of fruit and vegetables, low-fat meat (e.g. chicken), fish and wholegrain foods that are high in fibre (e.g. brown bread, brown rice and oats).

## Stay active

Regular light exercise has many benefits:



Helps you **sleep better**



**Improves your mood**



Helps you **maintain a healthy weight**



**Reduces stress**



Helps your body **fight infections**

## What else can I do to stay healthy?



Remember to **visit your doctor** for regular health checks.



Don't be afraid to **contact your doctor** if you feel your health has changed.



**Reduce stress** as much as possible.



**Avoid smoking,** or try to cut down, and avoid inhaling chemical fumes.

# Hepatitis D – How to help keep others safe

- ▶ It is important to understand how hepatitis D is spread, so you can take steps to help protect others.

## Hepatitis D can be spread by:



Contact with **infected body fluids during sex. Always use a condom** during sex to keep your partner safe.



Contact with **infectious body fluids:**

- Do not share any equipment used to inject or prepare drugs.
- Do not reuse needles.



Contact with **infected blood** or from an **open sore of an infected person. Cover all sores and wounds** to prevent infecting others – a tiny drop of blood could infect someone if it gets into their body.



**Activities that puncture through the skin:**

- **Avoid sharing razors and toothbrushes** (e. g. from bleeding gums or cuts from shaving).
- Keep all **personal items away from others.**
- **Avoid injuring other people,** for example by fighting, biting or scratching.



Hepatitis D can also be passed **from mother to baby at birth.** You should talk with your **doctor if you are pregnant or planning on having a baby.**



# Hepatitis D – Who should I tell?

- ▶ If you have been diagnosed with hepatitis D, you can choose who you want to tell and when. You may decide to tell some people so they can take extra precautions to stay protected.

It is recommended that you tell your current sexual partner and any sexual partners you've had since becoming infected so that they can be tested and treated.

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## Others you could tell include:



Nurses who take your blood



Dentists



Tattooists and body/ear piercers



Acupuncturists

**Many people with hepatitis D continue to work.** You do not need to tell your employer you have hepatitis D unless you work in a healthcare role where you are in close contact with blood. **Ask your doctor for advice if you are unsure who to tell.**

# Hepatitis D – Following your treatment

- ▶ Taking your treatment as instructed by your doctor can help you feel and stay well.

## To get the best out of your treatment, you should:

- Take your treatment, as your doctor has instructed.
- Attend all doctor visits.
- If you miss a dose or do not take your treatment at the right time, it may not work as well.



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There are many ways to **help you remember to take your treatment**, e.g. try setting an alarm on your phone.



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If you are staying away from home, you should **plan ahead to keep your treatment routine** as normal as possible.



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If you miss a dose and are not sure what to do, it's a good idea to **get in touch with your doctor for advice**.

# Hepatitis D – Mental Health

► Living with hepatitis D can often have an impact on daily life, making things a bit more difficult.



If you're finding things difficult it is ok to ask for help.



Talk with your doctor if you would like support for your mental health.

It is normal for people living with hepatitis D to experience different emotions. If you find that your mental wellbeing is being affected, there are lots of things you can try to do to improve it.

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## You might find it helpful to:



Try to relax and reduce stress



Be creative



Spend time in nature (e.g. a walk in the park)



Spend time with friends and family



Exercise



Try to get enough sleep

