

HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B is something that every pregnant woman should inform herself about in order to make informed choices regarding treatments, prevention, and vaccines given to the newborn. Hepatitis B can be a controversial topic and we urge you to research the topic beyond just this small overview.

WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?

Hepatitis B is a virus that can be spread by contact with infected blood and other body fluids. The virus can spread even through sharing razors, nail clippers, and toothbrushes. The virus can also enter the blood through the sharing of needles. The virus can pass from one person's infected blood to another through unclean piercings, tattoos, and acupuncture procedures. An infected person can pass the virus to another person through unprotected sex. If a woman is pregnant she can also pass the infection on to her unborn child during her pregnancy or when her child is born. *Babies can become very ill and possibly even die if they contract this disease.*

Some people who are infected with the hepatitis B virus can get really sick, some develop liver disease, and some may develop cancer or worse. Some may become chronic carriers meaning that they can pass the virus to others forever.

It is a part of routine vaccinations that babies will be given hepatitis B vaccine as soon as they are born, with an additional dose of hepatitis B vaccine to complete the vaccine series.

Hepatitis B can be prevented by:

- Abstaining from sexual activity
- Using latex condoms when you have sex
- Stay in a relationship with one person who you know is not infected and does not inject drugs
- Do not use illegal drugs. If you cannot stop using drugs don't share needles or syringes with anyone.
- Doctor's recommend the hepatitis B vaccine.