Hepatitis B: What Do Immigrants Need To Know?
Introduction

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver and is caused by the hepatitis B virus.

The virus can spread very easily (more easily than the AIDS virus).

After the virus enters the bloodstream, it can cause serious liver diseases such as chronic hepatitis (liver inflammation), cirrhosis, and liver cancer.

Immigrants are far more likely to carry the hepatitis B virus in their blood than people who were born in Canada or the United States.

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a serious disease of the liver. People who are infected with the hepatitis B virus often experience no symptoms and do not know that they have been exposed to the virus.

Many people who get hepatitis B recover and become immune to the disease. They will never contract it again and cannot pass the disease to other people.

However, some people who get hepatitis B never recover and become hepatitis carriers. They can pass the disease to their family members and sexual partners.
What are the symptoms of hepatitis B infection?

Many people have no symptoms when they are exposed to hepatitis B. The most common symptoms of hepatitis B infection are:

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdomen discomfort
- Yellowish skin and eyes
- Dark urine and light stools

B 型肝炎的症狀是什麼？

在感染 B 型肝炎的時候，很多人是沒有症狀的。

B 型肝炎最常見的症狀是：

- 發燒
- 疲倦
- 沒有食慾
- 嘔心嘔吐
- 腹部不適
- 皮膚和眼睛變黃
- 深色的尿液和淡色的糞便
那些國家的 B 型肝炎感染率比較高？

約有10%在北美的亞裔移民是 B 型肝炎帶菌者，少於1%在加拿大或美國的出生的人是B型肝炎帶菌者。

很多在非洲、中東、東歐和前蘇聯的國家，他們的 B 型肝炎感染率也很高。

沒有人知道為什麼 B 型肝炎在某些國家比較普遍，但是，一旦它在一個國家內形成了，就很容易由一代傳到下一代。

全球 B 型肝炎分布。深顏色的地方表示感染率高。

Hepatitis B worldwide. Darker colors indicate higher rates of infection.

Which countries have high rates of hepatitis B infection?

Asian countries have high rates of hepatitis B infection. About 10% of Asian immigrants to North America are hepatitis B carriers, compared to less than 1% of people who were born in Canada or the United States.

Most countries in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union also have high rates of hepatitis B infection.

Nobody knows why hepatitis B is more common in some countries than others. However, once the disease is established in a country, it is easily spread from one generation to the next.
**How is hepatitis B spread?**

Hepatitis B is transmitted by contact with an infected person's blood or other body fluids.

Exposure to hepatitis B can occur when:

- A woman who is a hepatitis B carrier infects her baby during childbirth
- A person who is a hepatitis B carrier engages in unprotected sexual intercourse
- A person who is a hepatitis B carrier shares razors, toothbrushes, or nail clippers with another person
- A person who is a hepatitis B carrier shares acupuncture, ear piercing, or tattooing needles with another person

Hepatitis B is not transmitted through the air, food, or water. People cannot get hepatitis B when they:

- Hold or shake hands with a hepatitis B carrier
- Stand close to a hepatitis B carrier when he/she sneezes or coughs
- Share forks, chopsticks, and other eating utensils with a hepatitis B carrier
- Eat food that has been prepared by a hepatitis B carrier

**B 型肝炎是如何傳播的？**

B 型肝炎是由接觸感染者的血液或其他體液來傳播。有幾種情況可能會引
起 B 型肝炎的感染：

- B 型肝炎帶菌的婦女在生產時傳染給她的嬰兒
- B 型肝炎帶菌者與他人進行不安全的性交
- B 型肝炎帶菌者和他人共用刮鬍刀、牙刷、或指甲刀
- B 型肝炎帶菌者和他人共用針灸、穿耳洞，或紋身用的針

B 型肝炎不是經由空氣、食物或水
來傳播。人們不會感染 B 型肝炎當
他們：

- 和一位 B 型肝炎帶菌者牽手或
握手
- 當一位 B 型肝炎帶菌者打噴嚏
或咳嗽時，和他/她站得很近
- 和一位 B 型肝炎帶菌者共用叉
子、筷子和其他進食用的餐具
- 吃由一位 B 型肝炎帶菌者所準
備的食物
How can people find out if they have been infected with hepatitis B?

A simple blood test can show whether people have been infected with hepatitis B.

The hepatitis B blood test:
- Can be done at any doctor’s office or clinic
- Just takes a couple of minutes
- Only requires a very small amount of blood
- Does not require any preparation
- Usually only needs to be done once

Hepatitis B test results are normally available in a couple of weeks.

如何才能知道自己是否感染过 B 型肝炎？

一個簡單的血液測試能顯示人們是否曾經感染 B 型肝炎。

B 型肝炎血液測試：

- 可以在任何醫生的辦公室或門診進行
- 只花幾分鐘
- 只需要非常少量的血
- 不需要做任何準備
- 通常只需要做一次

通常在兩三個星期後就可以知道 B 型肝炎測試結果。
There are three types of hepatitis B blood test results

Not infected with hepatitis B
- The person has never been exposed to hepatitis B. He/she should talk to his/her doctor about getting vaccinated against the virus.

Immune to the hepatitis B virus
- The person has been infected with the hepatitis B virus in the past and has fully recovered. He/she cannot infect another person and does not need to be vaccinated.

Hepatitis B carrier
- The person has been infected with the hepatitis B virus and has not fully recovered. He/she carries the virus that causes hepatitis B disease in his/her blood. The person is far more likely to experience liver damage, cirrhosis, and liver cancer than people who are not hepatitis B carriers.
- A hepatitis B carrier may look and feel healthy. However, he/she should take precautions to avoid infecting his/her family and other people. It is important for family members of carriers to get tested and vaccinated against hepatitis B.
- Hepatitis B carriers should get regular check-ups, blood tests, and X-rays so liver damage can be detected early. Additionally, doctors may recommend medicines to prevent liver damage.
Hepatitis B vaccination

People can be vaccinated against hepatitis B. The hepatitis B vaccine has been used in North America for over 20 years and is very safe.

If the hepatitis B blood test shows no previous exposure to the hepatitis B virus, the person should talk to his/her doctor about getting the hepatitis B vaccine.

Hepatitis B vaccination is especially important for the family members of carriers as well as people with multiple sexual partners.

Vaccination involves a series of three shots over a six-month period. The second shot is given one month after the first shot, and the third shot is given six months after the first shot.

注射 B 型肝炎疫苗

人们可以注射疫苗来对抗 B 型肝炎。B 型肝炎疫苗已经在北美使用超过 20 年而且很安全。

如果 B 型肝炎血液检验结果显示没有感染过 B 型肝炎病毒，这个人应该和他/她的医生谈谈是否注射 B 型肝炎疫苗。

注射 B 型肝炎疫苗对 B 型肝炎带菌者的家人以及有多位性伴侣的人特别重要。

疫苗注射是在六个月内打三针。第二针是在第一针打完一个月后打，第三针是在第一针打完六个月后打。
Why have many immigrants not been tested for hepatitis B?

There are many reasons immigrants give for not getting tested for hepatitis B. Here are just a few:

“I am not at risk of hepatitis B because I live in North America.”

Hepatitis B is less common in Canada and the United States than in regions such as Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. However, most immigrants with hepatitis B were infected as infants or children. Many immigrants are hepatitis B carriers when they come to North America.

“I have never had any symptoms of hepatitis B.”

About two-thirds of people who are infected with hepatitis B do not have any symptoms. Most hepatitis B carriers look and feel healthy, and don’t know they are carrying the virus in their blood. Only a blood test can tell if someone is a hepatitis B carrier. It is important for people to know if they are carriers so they can protect their families.

“I exercise regularly, eat healthy food, and do not drink alcohol.”

It is important to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, these things do not protect people from hepatitis B infection. It is still important to get a hepatitis B blood test. Depending on the results, people may benefit from a vaccine to prevent hepatitis B infection.

“My doctor has never told me that I should get tested for hepatitis B.”

Doctors have many patients and can’t remember to talk to every immigrant about being tested for hepatitis B. If a doctor does not know someone is an immigrant from a country with high rates of hepatitis B infection, he/she may not think about it. Immigrants should make an appointment to see their doctor and ask about hepatitis B testing.

“I am afraid the doctor will tell me that I am a hepatitis B carrier.”

It is important for hepatitis B carriers to know they carry the hepatitis B virus in their blood as soon as possible. They need to take precautions to protect their family. Also, carriers need to be checked regularly by a doctor, and some carriers may benefit from medicine to prevent liver damage.
How do I talk to my doctor about being tested for hepatitis B?

Tell your doctor that you recently received information about hepatitis B in an ESL class.

Tell your doctor that the information said that immigrants from your country are at high risk of hepatitis B.

Tell your doctor that you heard about the hepatitis B test and vaccine.

Show your doctor this pamphlet.

我要如何和我的醫生談做 B 型肝炎檢查的事？

告訴您的醫生，您最近在一個 ESL 課程中獲得有關 B 型肝炎的資料。

告訴您的醫生，資料中說由您的國家來的移民得 B 型肝炎的風險很高。

告訴您的醫生，您聽說過 B 型肝炎檢查和疫苗。

將這本小冊子給您的醫生看。
Remember...

Immigrants from most countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union are at high risk of hepatitis B infection.

Hepatitis B testing is the only way to find out if a person has been exposed to the hepatitis B virus.

There is a vaccine that can prevent hepatitis B infection.

Knowing your hepatitis B status can save you unnecessary worry, protect your family, and help future generations.

If you have not been tested for hepatitis B, make an appointment to see your doctor, show him/her this pamphlet, and talk to him/her about hepatitis B testing.