



- x Inject drugs or share needles, syringes, or other drug equipment
- x Live with a person who has chronic hepatitis B
- x Are exposed to blood on the job
- x Are hemodialysis patients
- x Travel to countries with moderate to high rates of hepatitis B

Does acute hepatitis B cause symptoms?

Sometimes. Although a majority of adults develop symptoms from acute hepatitis B infection, many young children do not. Symptoms of acute hepatitis B, if they appear, can include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements, joint pain, and jaundice (yellow color in the skin or eyes). Symptoms usually last a few weeks, but some people can be ill for as long as 6 months.

What are the symptoms of chronic hepatitis B?

Is the hepatitis B vaccine safe?

Yes the hepatitis B vaccine is safe. Soreness at the injection site is the most common side effect reported, along with a low grade fever. A vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as allergic reactions. However, the potential risks associated with hepatitis B are much greater than the risks the vaccine poses. Since the vaccine became available in 1982, more than 100 million people have received hepatitis B vaccine in the United States and no serious side effects have been reported.

People who have ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to baker's yeast (the kind used to make bread) or to a previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine should not get the vaccine. People who are moderately to severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should wait until they recover before getting the vaccine.

College students and their parents should discuss the risks and the benefits of vaccination with their healthcare providers. If college students decide to be vaccinated against hepatitis B, they (or their parents if they are less than 18 years of age) should contact their healthcare provider or the university/college student health center where they will be attending to inquire about receiving the vaccine.

For more information about the hepatitis B vaccine access the Vaccine Information Statement at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/hep-b.html>.

Adapted from material on the CDC Web site:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm>