

What should you do if your employees have chronic hepatitis B?

Be understanding and supportive

People with chronic hepatitis B can lead active lives, interact with co-workers, travel, and be productive employees. Most of them do not feel sick or have any symptoms.

Hepatitis B cannot be spread to others through casual contact in the workplace.

Provide access to appropriate medical management

Appropriate medical follow up and management will reduce the risk of liver disease. Monitoring is as simple as getting two inexpensive blood tests (called ALT and AFP) twice a year, and a liver ultrasound once a year. Not everyone with chronic HBV infection will need drug treatment.



Join the Jade Ribbon Campaign

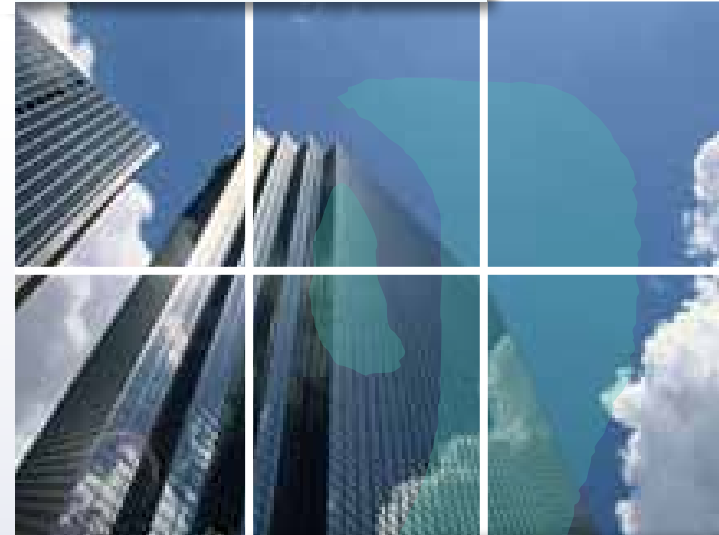


The Jade Ribbon is folded like the Chinese character for people “人” to symbolize the united voices of those fighting hepatitis B and liver cancer worldwide.



For more information visit <http://liver.stanford.edu>

The Business Response to Hepatitis B



An Action Guide for Managers



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What is hepatitis B (HBV)?

- Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver and is the leading cause of liver cancer.
- It is transmitted from infected mother to child, contaminated blood, and unprotected sex.
- Fortunately, hepatitis B is **preventable** with a safe and effective vaccine: the 3 shot series can provide lifelong protection!
- However, since most countries didn't adopt universal newborn vaccination laws until the 1990s or later, many adults remain unvaccinated.
- Unvaccinated adults who become infected with HBV can get sick with symptoms like fatigue and jaundice (yellowing of eyes and dark urine). Most adults will recover from the acute infection, but 0.5–1% may die from liver failure and up to 5% can develop chronic infection.

Why should you care about hepatitis B?

- **Hepatitis B is common worldwide**, especially in Asia, the Pacific Islands, Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.
- Most people born in Asia or Africa were infected at birth or in early childhood. This puts them at high risk for chronic (lifelong) infection that can lead to liver disease and liver cancer.
- A common myth is that HBV can be spread through contaminated food and water, like hepatitis A. *This is not true.* HBV is NOT transmitted in the workplace by casual contact such as sharing food and water, sharing eating utensils, hand-shaking, coughing, or sneezing.
- There is NO reason to avoid sharing a workplace with an HBV-infected person. Thus, **hepatitis B status should not be used for denying employment or promotion.**

What can you do to protect your workforce?

1 Review corporate policies

In some Asian countries, a blood test for the hepatitis B virus is frequently required before being hired. Some government agencies, companies and multinational corporations won't hire an individual who tests positive for hepatitis B. These actions are unfounded and discriminatory.

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no medical basis for discriminating against people with hepatitis B.

All companies should:

- Review national regulations pertaining to hepatitis B.
- Determine health and information services already available.
- Assess your hiring and firing policies and practices, especially in locations outside the United States.
- **Implement an action plan that promotes HBV education and eliminates discrimination.**

2 Review coverage available through your health plan

"The Purchaser's Guide to Clinical Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage," developed by the U.S. National Business Group on Health in collaboration with the CDC, provides businesses with the information they need to select, define, and implement preventive medical benefits. They recommend hepatitis B screening and immunization as a covered benefit for all infants, children and adults.

For more information visit

<http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/prevention/purchasers>

3 Provide hepatitis B vaccination

All employees who work in or travel to regions where HBV is common should get vaccinated against hepatitis B. Encourage employees to use covered health benefits for vaccination or refer them to low cost vaccination sites if coverage isn't available.



4 Provide employee education

To reduce fear and promote health, educate employees about hepatitis B and encourage them to ask their health care provider about hepatitis B screening and vaccination.

The National Business Group on Health, which identifies and promotes best practices among large employers, strongly encourages that employees and their families be educated about preventive services, including hepatitis B vaccination.

Below are some ways hepatitis B information can be easily disseminated to your workforce:

- Distribute educational brochures at health fairs and/or incorporate them into newsletters, pamphlets and online tools.

Free brochures in multiple languages available at <http://liver.stanford.edu>.
- Offer seminars with basic facts about hepatitis B. Include information about transmission, testing, vaccination and treatment options.