



Bloodborne Pathogens

What are Bloodborne Pathogens? Disease producing viruses (germs) carried by the blood. Bloodborne pathogens like Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are spread by direct contact with infected blood and/or body fluids. These diseases are NOT spread by casual contact (coughing, sneezing, hugging, etc.) or by food or water. A simple blood test can show if you are infected with HBV, HCV, and HIV.

	Hepatitis B (HBV)	Hepatitis C (HCV)	HIV
What is it?	An infection of the liver caused by the Hepatitis B Virus. HBV can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a chronic lifelong illness.	An infection of the liver caused by the Hepatitis C Virus. HCV can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a chronic lifelong illness.	Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Having AIDS means that the body has a hard time fighting infections.
How is it spread?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing needles, syringes or other medication-injection items • Exposure to blood from needlesticks or other sharp objects/instruments • Direct contact with the blood or open sores of an infected person • Birth to a mother infected with HBV • Having sexual contact with a person infected with HBV • Sharing personal care items that may have come in contact with another person's blood, such as razors or toothbrushes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing needles, syringes, or other medication injection items • Exposure to blood from needlesticks or other sharp objects/instruments • Direct contact with the blood or open sores of an infected person <p>Less commonly, a person can also get hepatitis C through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having sexual contact with a person infected with HCV • Sharing personal care items that may come into contact with blood or body fluids, such as razors or toothbrushes • Birth to a mother infected with HCV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing needles, syringes or other medication-injection items • Exposure to blood from needlesticks or other sharp objects/instruments • Direct contact with the blood or open sores of an infected person • Birth to a mother infected with HIV. • Breastmilk from a mother infected with HIV • Having sexual contact with a person infected with HIV • Sharing personal care items that may have come in contact with another person's blood, such as razors or toothbrushes
What are possible symptoms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Feeling tired • Loss of appetite • Nausea/vomiting • Belly pain • Dark urine • Clay-colored bowel movements (stools) • Joint pain • Yellowing of the skin/eyes <p>Most individuals with chronic HBV remain symptom free for as long as 20 or 30 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Feeling tired • Loss of appetite • Nausea/vomiting • Belly pain • Dark urine • Clay-colored bowel movements (stools) • Joint pain • Yellowing of the skin/eyes <p>Many people with HCV do not know they are infected because they do not look or feel sick.</p>	<p>You cannot rely on symptoms to know whether or not you are infected. Many people who are infected with HIV may not have symptoms for 10 years or more.</p>

	Hepatitis B (HBV)	Hepatitis C (HCV)	HIV
What are the long term effects?	Some may develop serious liver problems, including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer.	Some may develop cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer or liver failure. These can take 10, 20 or even 30 years to develop. Other people may have no long term effects.	AIDS is the late stage of HIV infection, when a person's immune system is severely damaged and has difficulty fighting diseases and certain cancers.
Can it be treated?	<p>There are no specific medications available to treat acute hepatitis B.</p> <p>People with chronic hepatitis B should be seen by a doctor regularly for signs of liver disease and evaluated for possible treatment.</p> <p>Several medications have been approved for hepatitis B treatment, and new drugs are in development. However, not every person with chronic hepatitis B needs to be on medications.</p> <p>There is a vaccine to prevent hepatitis B.</p>	<p>Medications are available to treat chronic hepatitis C infection. With the help of treatment, some people are able to rid their bodies of the hepatitis C virus. For someone with advanced hepatitis C disease, a liver transplant may be an option.</p> <p>There is not a vaccine to prevent hepatitis C.</p>	<p>Current medications can dramatically improve the health of people living with HIV and slow succession from HIV infection to AIDS. At this time, there is no cure for HIV infection.</p> <p>There is not a vaccine to prevent HIV.</p>
Can it be prevented?	<p>The best way to prevent getting a bloodborne disease is to avoid contact with the blood and body fluids of other people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwashing is the most important way to prevent the spread of many diseases. • Wear disposable gloves if you have to touch anyone's blood, body fluid or wound. • Don't share razors, toothbrushes or other household items that may be contaminated with blood. • Get vaccinated against hepatitis B. • Practice safer sex by using a latex condom correctly and consistently each time. • Only get tattoos or body piercings from licensed facilities or places that use sterile equipment. 		

For More Information:

Hepatitis B:

- New Jersey Department of Health
Hepatitis B Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/faq/hepb_faq.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm>

Hepatitis C:

- New Jersey Department of Health
Hepatitis C Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/faq/hepatitis_c_faq.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm>

HIV:

- New Jersey Department of Health
HIV Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) <http://nj.gov/health/aids/faqs.shtml>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>