

Hepatitis B Virus

Hep B or HBV

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is a risk group 2 virus and is one of the most frequently reported laboratory acquired infections. It is considered a **reproductive pathogen** due to its ability to transfer from mother to child during birth.

How can I be exposed to HBV?

- Exposure is primarily via percutaneous or mucosal exposure to infected blood or other body fluid.
- Mother to child transmission can occur during birth.
- Transmission has also been observed in households (non-sexual), sexual contact, needle sharing, and in occupational/health-care related settings.

How can I protect myself from exposure?

- Avoid direct skin contact by wearing protective clothing and gloves.
- Avoid mucous membrane exposure by using eye/face protection for procedures that may produce splashes.
- Avoid respiratory exposure by using a biosafety cabinet or other primary containment device and wearing a respirator for procedures that may produce aerosols, particularly centrifugation, resuspension of pellets, and washing.
- The use of needles, syringes, and other sharp objects should be strictly limited, and additional precautions should be taken when working with animals.

What should I do if I think I've been exposed to HBV?

Wash the exposed area immediately with soap and water for 15 minutes and seek medical treatment.

What symptoms should I look for after a potential exposure?

Nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, fever, jaundice, dark urine.

How long does it take for symptoms to develop?

Usually, 45-180 days with an average of 60-90 days.

Is there a treatment or vaccine?

Effective vaccines are available and should be provided to laboratory personnel.

Can I transmit it to other people?

Yes, transmission has occurred via mother to child, household contact, sexual contact, and needle sharing. Blood can be infectious for several weeks before the onset of symptoms.

Can I transmit it to my pets?

No, humans are the only known host.

Can it survive on surfaces?

Yes, HBV can survive and remain infectious on environmental surfaces for at least 7 days.

See *Pathogen Safety Data Sheet* for More Information

