

# Treatment for hepatitis B

This pamphlet can be used to explain check-ups, test results and make discussion easier.

## Chronic hepatitis B and your health

You have chronic hepatitis B. This means that the hepatitis B virus has been in your body for at least 6 months. You will have hepatitis B your whole life even though you may feel well and healthy.

The doctor wants you to start taking tablets now. The hepatitis B virus was not causing damage to your liver before as it was sleeping. But that has changed.

The virus has woken up and started to make your liver inflamed and damaged. Some people get serious scarring of the liver; this is called cirrhosis. Any damage means the liver will struggle to do its job to keep you healthy. You may be at greater risk of getting liver cancer.

## Taking medicine



**It is important to take the tablets every day.**

**The doctor wants you to take tablets every day.**

The tablets will reduce the virus in your body to a very low level.

When the virus level is very low it sleeps and stops causing liver damage. This also helps to prevent liver cancer.

You will need to take the tablets every day; for all of your life. There is no cure for hepatitis B.

Plan ahead - tell your doctor if you need more tablets.

If you stop taking the tablets the medicine can't do its job to protect you from liver damage.

Discuss any questions you have with your doctor.

## Check-ups

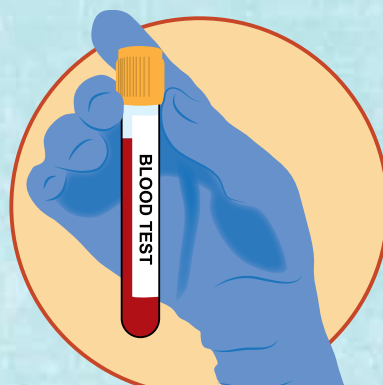
You need to have a check-up every 6 months. You need a **blood test** every 6 months and you may need an **ultrasound**.

A check-up tells the doctor:

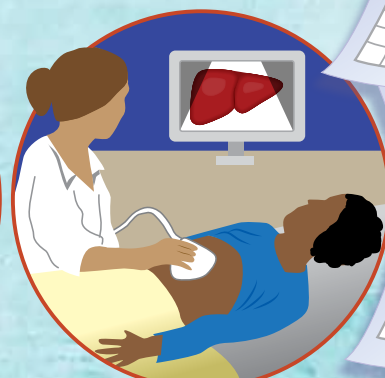
- if the virus has woken up and levels are increasing,
- if liver damage or cancer is occurring, or
- if tablets are working.

You can make an appointment and go to your local doctor or liver specialist for these check-ups.

**Have a check-up every 6 months**



**Have blood test every 6 months**



**Ultrasound scan – check for liver cancer**

January

February

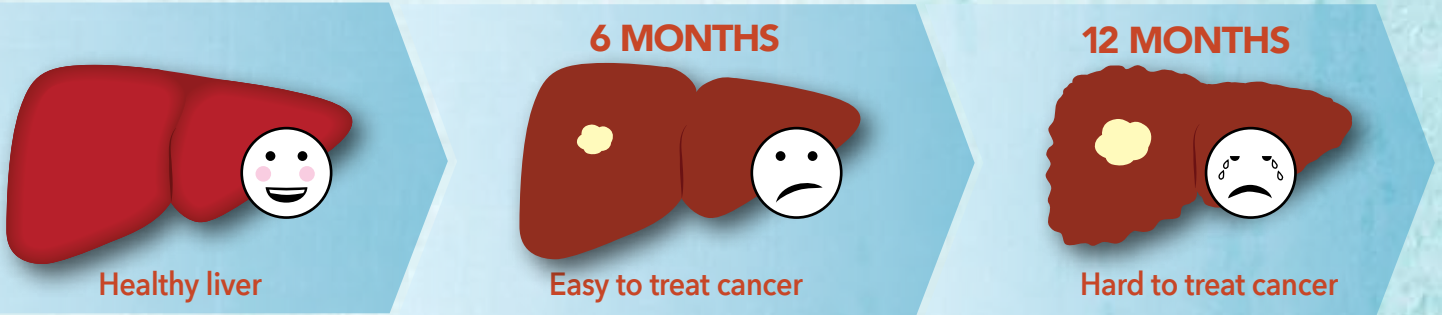
March

April

May

June

# Stay healthy - detect cancer early



Liver cancer can grow very quickly. Six monthly ultrasound scans help pick up any early cancer in the liver. Early damage and small cancers are easier to treat.

## Keep your liver strong

- Get a check-up every 6 months.
- Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking.
- Be a healthy body weight – eat well and keep active.
- Do exercise you enjoy; jogging, walking or tai chi.
- Tell your doctor if you are taking herbs or traditional medicines.



## Hepatitis B and your family

If someone in your family also has hepatitis B they may not need to take tablets right now as the virus is sleeping and not causing damage to their liver. They still need to have regular check-ups.

Family members who do not have hepatitis B can have a vaccination to protect them against hepatitis B.



**It is safe to share meals with your family and friends.**

**Remember – stay strong. Take your medicine every day. Have check-ups every 6 months.**

**Your test results today**      \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

ALT blood test  
(shows liver inflammation)      \_\_\_  OK

Viral load blood test  
(shows level of virus in the blood)      \_\_\_  OK

Liver ultrasound  
(scan of the liver)      \_\_\_  OK

**Your next check-ups**

Blood tests due on: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor visit due on: \_\_\_\_\_

Ultrasound due on: \_\_\_\_\_

