

# Introduction and Transmission: Hepatitis B

**Hepatitis B is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver. Over time living with chronic (long term) hepatitis B causes liver scarring and damage. This increases the risk of liver cancer and liver failure.**

**Hepatitis B cannot be cured but it can be well managed to reduce the risk of liver damage. There is an effective vaccination available to prevent hepatitis B.**

**Transmission of hepatitis B happens in three ways:**

## **1. Mother to baby**

If a pregnant person is living with hepatitis B the risk of transmission to the baby is high. However with good specialist care the risk can be reduced significantly. This may include medication for the mother during pregnancy and both hepatitis B vaccination and another injection called immunoglobulin for the baby as soon as practical after birth.

## **2. Blood to blood**

This includes risk factors such as sharing injecting equipment and backyard/unsterile tattoos and piercings.

## **3. Sexual transmission**

Hepatitis B can be transmitted through unprotected sex.

There is a safe and effective vaccination that prevents you from getting hepatitis B. This is only effective if you get the vaccine before exposure. For adults this is three injections over six months.