WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?
• Hepatitis B is a disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV).
• Most adults who have HBV infection will recover in 6–12 months without treatment.
• However, some can develop chronic (lifelong) hepatitis B infection.
• There is a HBV vaccine available that may prevent infection.

WHO SHOULD GET A HBV TEST?
Talk with your health care provider about being tested and vaccinated for HBV infection if you:
• Have sex with an infected person
• Have multiple sex partners
• Have a sexually transmitted disease
• Are a man who has sex with men
• Inject drugs or share needles, syringes, or other drug equipment
• Live with a person who has chronic hepatitis B
• Are exposed to blood on the job (for example, health care and public safety workers)
• Have end-stage renal disease
• Have chronic liver disease
• Have diabetes and are age 19-59
• Are a person needing immunosuppressive therapy, including chemotherapy, immunosuppression related to organ transplantation, and immunosuppression for rheumatologic or gastroenterologic disorders
• Were born in a region of high and intermediate rates of HBV
• Are a U.S. born person not vaccinated as an infant and your parents were born in areas with high rates of HBV

SHOULD I GET A HBV TEST?
• Yes, if any of the above statements is true. Getting tested is the only way to know if you have HBV infection.
• If your HBV test is negative, you may be able to get vaccinated to prevent HBV infection.
• If you have HBV infection you may not show symptoms for years, but can still pass the virus to others.
• If you have HBV infection, seek treatment from your VA provider to prevent more serious liver disease and death.

HOW CAN I BE TESTED FOR HBV?
• Your VA health care provider can order the HBV blood test. Results are usually available in 1-2 weeks and will let you know whether you have HBV infection or if you can benefit from HBV vaccine.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?
• www.hepatitis.va.gov/hbv/index.asp
• www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/index.htm

FACT SHEET | MAY 2019
WWW.HEPATITIS.VA.GOV