

# HEPATITIS B TESTING

## TESTING INFORMATION FOR VETERANS



### 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 to a hepatitis B positive mother
- Travel to countries with moderate to high rates of hepatitis B

- 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](http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/hbv/index.asp)
- [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/index.htm)