

[DH reminds people at higher infection risk to get tested for hepatitis B](#)

To echo World Hepatitis Day 2023, the Department of Health (DH) has stepped up promotions with the theme "Test hepatitis B, save your life", in order to raise public awareness of hepatitis B, and at the same time remind family members and sexual partners of people with chronic hepatitis B (CHB) and people with a higher risk of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection of the importance of hepatitis B testing.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated July 28 as World Hepatitis Day to raise awareness of viral hepatitis. To call on the public to get the life-saving test for hepatitis B, the DH has produced a [new video](#), which has been uploaded to the [YouTube channel](#) of the Centre for Health Protection.

According to the latest local epidemiological studies, about 6 per cent of Hong Kong's population had been infected with HBV, amounting to about 400 000 people with hepatitis B. The routes of HBV transmission include transmission during delivery from infected mothers to their babies, contact with blood or body fluids of infected persons, and unprotected sexual contact with an infected person.

A spokesman for the DH said, "The younger a person is when infected with HBV, the higher the risk of developing CHB. Up to 90 per cent of new-born babies infected with HBV will develop CHB."

"CHB is a lifelong infection that may remain asymptomatic for decades until severe liver damage develops. About 15 to 40 per cent of untreated people with CHB may progress to life-threatening advanced liver diseases such as cirrhosis and liver cancer. In Hong Kong, liver cancer is the number three killer-cancer which claimed 1 447 lives in 2021. There are local studies showing that the majority of liver cancer cases were related to CHB," the spokesman added.

People at a higher risk of HBV infection, including family members (such as parents, siblings and offspring) and sexual partners of people with CHB, people who inject drugs, men who have sex with men, sex workers, and people with HIV, should get tested to ascertain their hepatitis B status. A blood test is required to diagnose HBV infection.

The DH has been enhancing risk-based viral hepatitis screenings at its relevant services for the above-mentioned at-risk populations. Members of the public may also consult their family doctors for hepatitis B blood testing and should take necessary measures to prevent HBV infection, including receiving hepatitis B vaccination as applicable.

People with CHB should seek medical consultation on appropriate

treatment plans, and have regular follow-ups and examinations for early detection and management of changes in their liver condition.

Early identification and management of people with CHB is one of the focus areas in the [Hong Kong Viral Hepatitis Action Plan 2020 – 2024](#), which was launched in October 2020. The Action Plan sets out a comprehensive strategy with specific actions by the DH, the Hospital Authority and other stakeholders to reduce transmission of viral hepatitis and related morbidity and mortality, driving the progress towards the WHO's goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

For information on World Hepatitis Day 2023, please visit the DH's thematic page (www.hepatitis.gov.hk/english/news_activities/world_hepatitis_day_2023.html). More information about hepatitis B is also available on the DH's website (www.hepatitis.gov.hk/english/index.html).