

What are the symptoms?

HIV

- Rash
- Nausea
- Aches in joints and muscles
- Fever
- Headache
- Swollen glands
- Fatigue
- Mouth ulcers

Hepatitis C

- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Joint pains
- Nausea & vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms (fever, headaches, sweats)
- Anxiety / depression
- Alcohol intolerance and pain in the liver

Hepatitis B

- Nausea & vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of appetite
- Joint pains
- Muscle aches
- Fever
- Pain in the abdomen
- Jaundice

This is not a full list of all the symptoms someone with a BBV might experience. As explained earlier, some people have no symptoms and others present as very unwell. If you think you are at risk of a BBV, speak to us and get tested.

Did you know?

In the UK sharing any drug injecting equipment is the most common way of becoming infected with Hepatitis C (i.e. needles, syringes, spoons, water, filters)

How you can reduce risks

- Don't start injecting drugs, or if you do, stop.
- If you do inject, don't ever share injecting equipment (needles, syringes, filters, spoons and anything else that might be contaminated with blood).
- Don't help others to start injecting.
- If having ears pierced or a new tattoo ensure equipment is sterile.
- Using condoms reduces risk of contracting BBV's sexually.
- Don't share razors or tooth brushes as they could have blood on them.
- If accessing medical/dental treatment abroad ensure medical equipment is sterilised or taken from a sealed pack.
- Only have treatment if it's essential. If you need a blood transfusion, ask for screened blood.

Find out more

If you would like more information or support with BBV's please contact us at Inclusion Recovery Hampshire. Information is also available at:
NHS Website: www.nhs.uk
Talk to Frank Website: www.talktofrank.com
Adfam website: www.adfam.org.uk

HOW TO CONTACT US

NORTH: 01782 639856
StarsNorth@mpft.nhs.uk

EAST: 01283 741053
StarsEast@mpft.nhs.uk

WEST: 01785 270080
StarsWest@mpft.nhs.uk

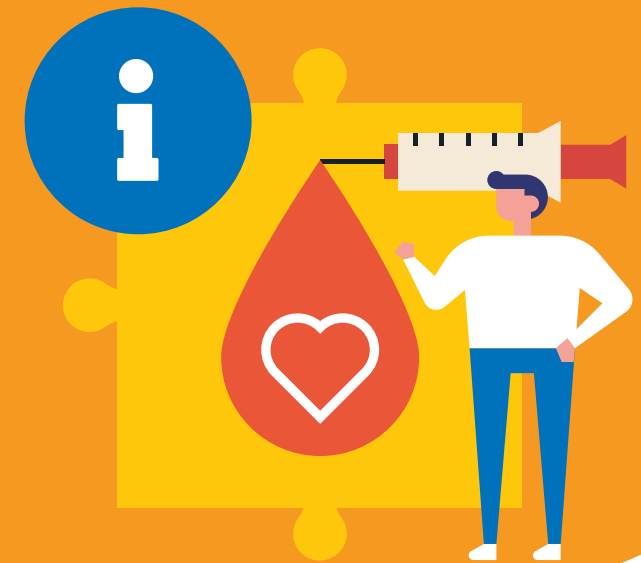
Or visit: www.staffstars.org

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This leaflet was created by:  **NHS inclusion** Part of Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust Find out more at www.inclusion.org

Blood Borne Viruses (BBV's)

What you need to know!



 STaRS

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What are blood borne viruses (BBV's)?

Blood-borne viruses (BBV's) are viruses that some people carry in their blood and can be spread from one person to another. Some are also carried in bodily fluids.

- BBV's are viruses such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.
- Those infected with a BBV may show little or no symptoms of serious disease, but other infected people may be severely ill.
- They can be spread from one person to another when infected blood comes into contact with none-infected blood.
- Those infected with a BBV may show little or no symptoms of serious disease, but other infected people may be severely ill.
- Hepatitis is a virus that can damage the liver. Unlike hepatitis A and B, there is no vaccine to protect against hepatitis C, but effective treatment is available.

The myths

- The main route of transmission for Hepatitis C is sharing razors and toothbrushes.
- You can tell when someone has a BBV because they are poorly and look unwell.

The truth is risks of contracting BBV's come from sharing equipment to inject drugs with an infected person, and unprotected sex. You can't tell if someone has HIV or hepatitis C by looking at them. You can become infected with a virus whether the person who infects you appears to be ill or not – indeed, they may be unaware they are ill as some persistent viral infections do not cause symptoms.

What are the most common BBV's?

There are 3 common BBV's and these are detailed below;

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

A virus which attacks cells that help the body fight infection, making a person more vulnerable to other infections and diseases. HIV causes acquired immunodeficiency virus (AIDS), a disease affecting the body's immune system however research shows that when HIV is treated very few people progress to AIDS.

Hepatitis B (HBV)

A virus that infects the liver. Most adults who get it have it for a short time and then get better. This is called acute hepatitis B. Sometimes the virus causes a long-term infection, called chronic hepatitis B. Over time, it can damage your liver.

Hepatitis C (HCV)

A virus that can infect the liver. If left untreated, it can sometimes cause serious and potentially life-threatening damage to the liver over many years. Testing and treatment is readily available in service, just ask your keyworker. There are different strains of HCV so a person can become re-infected with a different strain.

How can BBV's be passed on

Blood-borne viruses (BBV's) are transmitted by blood, or other body fluids containing virus. This happens when the blood or fluids enter into the body of a susceptible person.

The more common routes of transmission include:

- Sexual intercourse (common for HBV, HIV inefficient for HCV)
- Sharing injecting equipment when contaminated with blood
- Childbirth (mother infects the child before or during birth, or through breast-feeding)

Less common routes of transmission are:

- Contamination of open wounds (e.g. blood injuries during sporting activities);
- Contamination of skin lesions (e.g. eczema);
- Splashing of the mucous membranes of the eye, nose or mouth; and
- Human bites when blood is drawn (this may be more of a problem in certain occupations, e.g. prison and police service).
- There is also a risk of acquiring a BBV infection via blood transfusion. However, in the UK, all blood donations are screened for HBV, HCV and HIV, meaning the risk is remote.

