Hepatitis B

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. It is due to a virus infection. Symptoms include fatigue, fever, poor appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, jaundice, and dark urine. Hepatitis B was once called serum hepatitis. It is transmitted mainly by sexual contact or by blood transfer through shared needles. Symptoms usually develop from 1-6 months after exposure to the virus. The diagnosis is confirmed by blood tests. **Hepatitis B can cause a very serious illness and result in permanent liver damage (*cirrhosis*) or chronic infection in some patients. It can also increase the risk of getting liver cancer**.

Treatment for hepatitis includes bed rest, especially if you have a fever. A good diet is very important. Eat as much as you comfortably can. If you are nauseated or vomit, you should stick to a clear liquid diet until you stomach settles down. Do not drink any alcohol or use drugs as this can increase liver damage. Hepatitis B can be prevented by vaccination. Any person with whom you have had sex or shared a needle over the past 6 months should be checked to see if they need vaccination.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOU DEVELOP:

- Marked increased pain, repeated vomiting, or dehydration.
- A high fever, marked weakness, severe headache, or confusion**.**

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