

FACT SHEET for HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS:

(revised April 8, 2005)

## Hepatitis B Surface Antigen (HBsAg) Positive Patients

### Hepatitis B Virus Infection

- HBsAg+ persons should receive follow-up care to assess stage of disease, liver health, and eligibility for treatment.
- Acute infection is defined as HBsAg+, IgM anti-HBc+, with clinical signs.
- Chronic infection is defined as HBsAg+ for  $\geq 6$  months.
- Chronically infected persons are at increased risk for developing chronic liver disease and hepatocellular carcinoma. Referral for specialized care and periodic testing may be appropriate. Treatment may be appropriate for chronically infected persons who meet specific clinical criteria.
- Chronically infected persons *with evidence of chronic liver disease* should receive hepatitis A vaccine.
- HBsAg+ persons should be cautioned not to drink alcohol.

### Prevention of Transmission

- Anyone who is HBsAg+ can transmit hepatitis B virus sexually and through blood. Infectivity ranges from highly infectious (HBeAg+) to minimally infectious (anti-HBe+). HBsAg+ persons with an undetectable level of viral DNA should still be considered infectious.
- Sexually active HBsAg+ persons should be advised to use latex condoms.
- HBsAg+ persons who inject drugs should be advised never to share used needles, syringes, or other materials and equipment (water, cotton, cooker) used to prepare drugs for injection.
- HBsAg+ pregnant women should ensure that their newborns receive HBIG and hepatitis B vaccination at birth and complete the vaccine series on time. DPH provides case management for HBsAg+ pregnant women and their children. Contact Laura Diskavich, RN at (860) 509-7900 for more information.
- HBsAg+ persons should be advised not to share personal items such as razors and toothbrushes.
- Household and sexual contacts should receive testing and vaccination.
- HBsAg+ persons should not be excluded routinely from day care, school, or health care professions. Health care workers might be restricted from performing invasive procedures if HBeAg+.
- Hepatitis B can be transmitted the same way as hepatitis C and HIV. Depending on history, tests for hepatitis C and HIV may be appropriate.