



MASON CHEMICAL COMPANY

t e c h n i c a l i n f o r m a t i o n



HBV

Hepatitis B Virus

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. It is usually caused by viral infections, toxic agents or drugs but may be an autoimmune response. It is characterized by jaundice, abdominal pain, liver enlargement and sometimes fever. It may be mild, or can be acute leading to fulminant hepatitis. Others forms usually viral or alcoholic are chronic, and can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer.

There are many forms of viral hepatitis although they can have similar symptoms. The only way to discover if you have viral hepatitis and which variety you have is through blood tests. Liver function tests can give an indication of how much inflammation there is, and other tests can determine which virus is responsible

The disease known as hepatitis B is caused by the infectious Hepatitis B virus (HBV). World wide, it is estimated that there are over 350 million hepatitis B carriers which represents 5% of the worlds population. HBV is responsible for killing about one million people a year. It is estimated that 10 to 30 million people become infected with the virus each year. The virus is very common in Asia, China, Philippines, China, Africa and the Middle east. In Europe and North America the incidence of known carriers is about 1 in a 1000 people.

Centers for Disease Control estimates there are approximately 280,000 HBV infections each year in the U.S. Approximately 8,700 health care workers each year contract hepatitis B, and about 200 will die as a result. In addition, some who contract HBV will become carriers, passing the disease on to others. Carriers also face a significantly higher risk for other liver ailments which can be fatal, including cirrhosis of the liver and primary liver cancer.

HBV infection is transmitted through exposure to blood and other infectious body fluids and tissues. Anyone with occupational exposure to blood is at risk of contracting the infection. It is also known to be transmitted by sexual intercourse and intravenous drug use.

