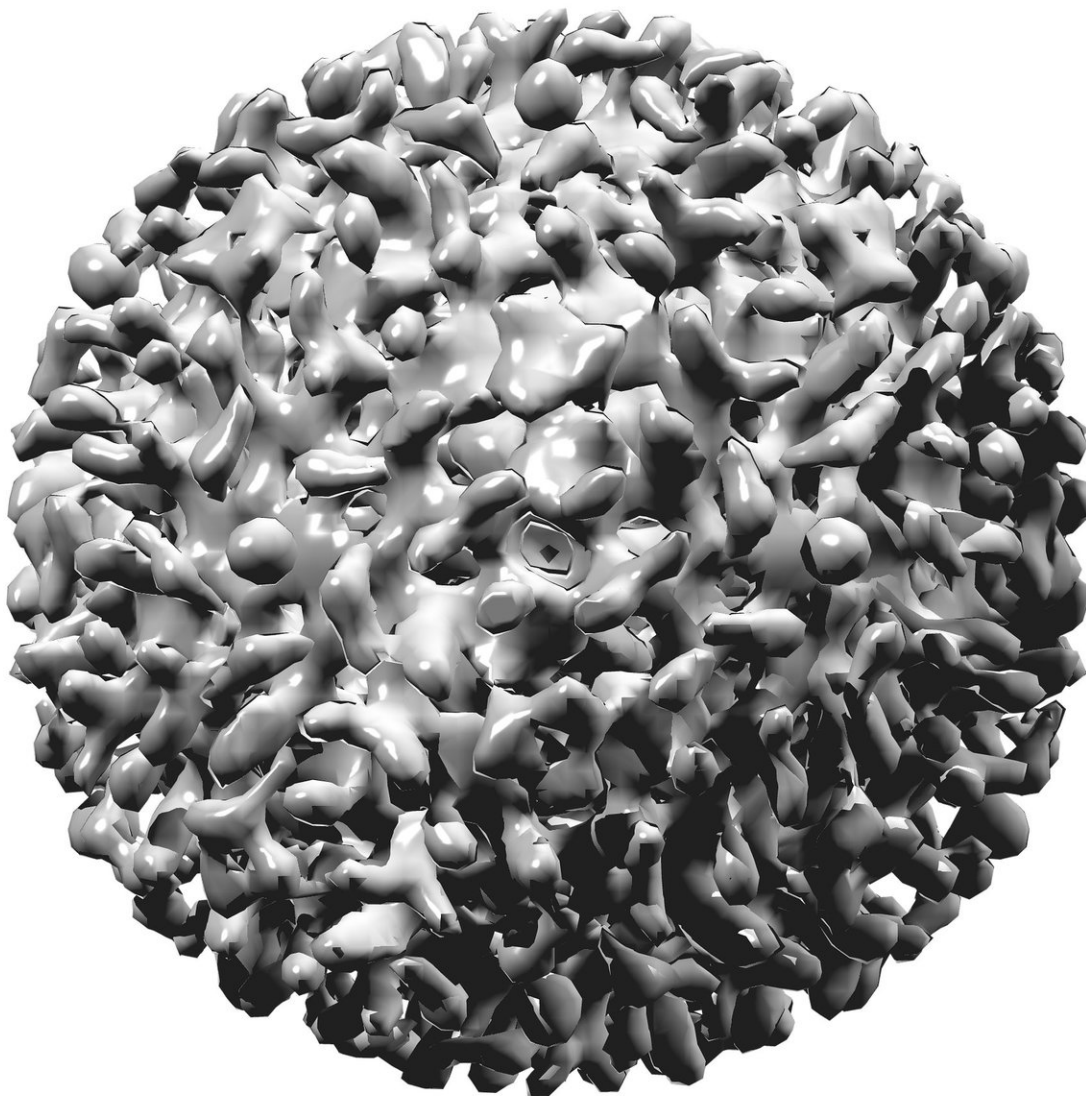


CDC: All adults should be screened for hepatitis B

March 16 2023, by Hunter Boyce



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People with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection are at an increased risk for liver cancer, cirrhosis and are 70% to 85% more likely to die prematurely than the general population, according to the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With an estimated 580,000 to 2.4 million people in the U.S. infected with HBV, the CDC is now recommending that all adults should be tested for the virus at least once in their lives.

"New recommendations include hepatitis B screening using three [laboratory tests](#) at least once during a lifetime for adults aged ≥ 18 years," the CDC said on Friday.

While vaccinations are considered highly effective at preventing HBV infections, a total 70% of U.S. adults reported they were unvaccinated as of 2018.

"HBV is transmitted through contact with infected blood or [body fluids](#), such as during pregnancy or delivery, through sex, or by [injection drug use](#) (IDU), with the greatest risk for chronic infection occurring during perinatal infection," the CDC explained.

The centers' recent report updates and expands upon CDC recommendations that have been in place since 2008.

"CDC evaluated the addition of a universal screening recommendation among adults as well as testing persons expected to be at increased risk for HBV infection that were not included in the 2008 testing recommendations."

The newly CDC recommended screenings are expected to save a number of lives per year, as well as a number of debilitating conditions and millions of dollars in health care costs.

"Compared with [current practice](#), universal screening would be expected to avert an additional 7.4 cases of compensated cirrhosis, 3.3 cases of decompensated cirrhosis, 5.5 cases of HCC, 1.9 liver transplants, and 10.3 HBV-related deaths per 100,000 persons screened," the CDC reported.

"Universal HBsAg screening of adults aged 18–69 years would save \$262,857 per quality-adjusted life year (QALY) and would result in a gain of 135 QALYs per 100,000 adults screened."

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