

# Blood tests

Everyone with hepatitis B needs regular monitoring and that includes six-monthly blood tests to check the health of their liver. But what tests should primary healthcare providers be doing and why?

**Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg):** Determines whether there is continued viral infection

**Hepatitis B e-antigen (HBeAG):** This checks the status of infection. A positive result indicates the virus is in the more active form. The e-antigen is a protein from the hepatitis B virus that circulates in infected blood when the virus is actively replicating. Being eAntigen positive means the patient is likely to have a high level of virus present and can spread it to other people

**Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP):** This is a biomarker for liver cancer. It's vital primary healthcare providers request these six-monthly for all patients who have continued viral infection (HBsAg-positive). If results show an elevated AFP level, please seek advice from our clinicians

**Liver function tests (LFTs):** Check for active liver inflammation. Depending on your patient's results anti-viral medication may be considered.

***Please note a patient can have hepatitis B even if their LFTs are normal. If your patient has risk factors for hepatitis B infection please screen them with the above tests even if the LFTs are normal.***

If your patient's liver blood tests are abnormal and you want to see if the hepatitis B virus could be the cause, the best test to do is the hepatitis B viral load (HBV DNA).

\* Not everyone with hepatitis B needs treatment. Our clinicians can provide advice on about how and when to treat patients with hepatitis B.