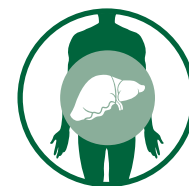




WA Hepatitis B Strategy 2015–2018



HEPATITIS B

The goals of this strategy are aligned with the goals of the [Second National Hepatitis B Strategy 2014–2017 \(external site\)](#) and are:

- to reduce the transmission of, and morbidity and mortality caused by, hepatitis B
- to minimise the personal and social impact for people living with hepatitis B.

The *WA Hepatitis B Strategy 2015–2018* aims to achieve these goals through a strong partnership approach and collective action between government, non-government, healthcare, and research organisations.

[Hepatitis B \(Healthy WA\)](#) is an important public health issue. If not treated, chronic hepatitis B infection can lead to serious liver disease, including cirrhosis, liver cancer, and in some cases, liver failure. Hepatitis B is vaccine preventable.

In 2014 there were 639 notifications for hepatitis B in Western Australia (WA). Of these notifications:

- 24 were newly acquired (evidence of the disease having been acquired in the 24 months prior to diagnosis)
- 615 were unspecified (infections of unknown duration).



PREVENTION
& EDUCATION



TESTING &
DIAGNOSIS



DISEASE MANAGEMENT
& CLINICAL CARE



WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT



ENABLING
ENVIRONMENT



RESEARCH, EVALUATION
& SURVEILLANCE

Strategic context

[The Auckland Statement \(external site\)](#) on viral hepatitis sets targets to:

- increase vaccination against hepatitis B among those at greatest risk
- ensure those living with hepatitis B are diagnosed
- increase the number of people living with hepatitis B who are accessing treatment.

National

In 2014 the Australian Government Department of Health launched the [Second National Hepatitis B Strategy 2014–2017 \(external site\)](#). The strategy provides direction for coordinated action to:

- reduce new hepatitis B infections
- achieve and maintain high levels of hepatitis B vaccination
- increase the proportion of people with chronic hepatitis B who have been diagnosed
- increase access to appropriate management and care for people with chronic hepatitis B
- reduce the burden of disease attributed to chronic hepatitis B
- eliminate the negative impact of stigma, discrimination, legal, and human rights issues on people's health.

Western Australia

Western Australia has made progress in recent years, through the [Implementation Plan for Western Australia for the National Hepatitis B Strategy 2010–2013 \(PDF 2.9MB\)](#). That plan included key priorities outlined in the [First National Hepatitis B Strategy 2010–2013 \(external site\)](#).

The *WA Hepatitis B Strategy 2015–2018* follows on from the previous Implementation Plan and aligns with the national strategy and *the Auckland Statement* to address the needs of people living with, and affected by, hepatitis B in WA.

Significant progress has been made in recent years including:

- high rates of childhood vaccination against hepatitis B through the national childhood vaccination program
- decreasing rates of hepatitis B notifications among Aboriginal people in WA
- development of a state [Chronic Hepatitis B and C Primary Care Pathway \(PDF 1.56MB\)](#)
- increased availability of workforce development in WA, including online training programs
- development of a [National Hepatitis B Testing Policy \(external site\)](#).

Priority populations

Priority populations for this hepatitis B strategy include:

- people living with hepatitis B
- people from countries with a high prevalence of hepatitis B
- Aboriginal people
- children born to mothers with hepatitis B
- people who inject drugs
- people in custodial settings
- other unvaccinated people who may be at higher risk of infection.

Monitoring and evaluation

Progress against the *WA Hepatitis B Strategy 2015–2018* will be collated in the Hepatitis B Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This framework will be updated regularly.

Other useful sources of data relating to hepatitis B include the:

- [statewide notifiable disease report for WA \(external site\)](#)
- [hepatitis B monthly report for WA](#)
- [quarterly and annual sexually transmitted infections and blood-borne virus epidemiology reports for WA](#)
- [National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System \(external site\)](#).

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WA Hepatitis B Strategy – prevention and education

Increase knowledge and awareness of hepatitis B

Knowledge and awareness of hepatitis B will be addressed through:

- increasing awareness of hepatitis B among priority populations and the wider community
- continuing to support education and support services for the hepatitis B affected community
- making hepatitis B information and resources available in languages other than English.

Promote safer sexual and safer injecting practices

Safer sexual and safer injecting practices will be promoted in line with the [WA STI Strategy 2015–2018](#) and [WA Hepatitis C Strategy 2015–2018](#).

This will be achieved by:

- increasing the use, access to, and acceptability of, condoms in priority populations
- increasing promotion of safer sex behaviours and regular testing
- building STI-related knowledge and skills in priority populations
- increasing availability, access to, and use of, sterile injecting equipment among people who inject drugs.

Increase uptake of vaccination

The uptake of the hepatitis B vaccination will be increased by:

- achieving and maintaining vaccination rates of 95% or above in children
- increasing access to the hepatitis B vaccination among priority populations.

Care for pregnant women

Maintain monitoring and provision of appropriate care of pregnant women with chronic hepatitis B, and children born to these mothers, by continuing to:

- monitor, and provide appropriate care and management to, pregnant women with chronic hepatitis B
- provide appropriate care to children born to mothers with chronic hepatitis B to prevent vertical transmission.

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WA Hepatitis B Strategy – testing and diagnosis

Increase access to testing

Increase access to testing for people at risk of hepatitis B by:

- increasing routine and opportunistic testing as part of health checks, particularly among:
 - people from countries with a high prevalence of hepatitis B
 - gay men and other men who have sex with men
 - people who inject drugs
 - Aboriginal people
 - those in custodial settings
- increasing awareness among healthcare workers and the affected community of the need to test those at risk of hepatitis B
- increasing testing options available, for example through community-based and outreach services
- increasing awareness of the [National Hepatitis B Testing Policy \(external site\)](#) and the need to test migrants from high prevalence countries
- employing evidence based, culturally sensitive, approaches that promote testing among people from high prevalence countries.

Improve access to support services

Referral and access to appropriate support services will also be improved at the point of diagnosis, to initiate a pathway to care for people with, or at risk of, hepatitis B. Key opportunities will be through:

- promoting engagement with community education and support services for people with, or at risk of, hepatitis B
- increasing awareness among health professionals and patients of referral options following testing.

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WA Hepatitis B Strategy – disease management and clinical care

Increase awareness of the health impacts of hepatitis B

Awareness of the long-term health impacts of chronic hepatitis B, and of the availability of appropriate management, treatment, and community support, will be improved among priority populations. This will be achieved through:

- continued support of community-based organisations to inform the affected community about the need to manage their condition, and the treatment options available
- ensuring referral pathways are in place and used between primary healthcare clinics and community organisations.

Improve management and treatment

Increase the number of people living with chronic hepatitis B infection receiving appropriate management and treatment.

This will be achieved by:

- developing a process for accrediting GPs to prescribe hepatitis B medications
- providing and promoting workforce development opportunities for GPs about providing appropriate management for people living with chronic hepatitis B, including becoming prescribers
- increasing the number of hepatitis B GP prescribers, with the aim of having coverage across all regions, particularly in areas identified as having a high burden of disease.

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WA Hepatitis B Strategy – workforce development

Increase awareness and knowledge

Increase awareness and knowledge of hepatitis B among the health, community, and youth workforce. Particular focus will be placed on the areas of prevention, testing, management, and treatment.

Emphasis will be placed on:

- making training and education available, including cultural competency training, through a variety of mediums, such as:
 - online
 - face-to-face
 - webinars
 - videoconferences.
- ensuring availability of training for healthcare workers in areas identified as likely to have a high burden of disease
- developing and promoting a central directory of workforce development opportunities.

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WA Hepatitis B Strategy – enabling environment

Promote rights and support access

Create supportive and enabling environments that promote the health and rights of those living with, or at risk of, hepatitis B, and support access to hepatitis B prevention, treatment, and care services.

Key focus will be placed on:

- engaging with affected communities to identify and address barriers to meeting their needs
- ensuring consumer participation at key forums
- implementing strategies to reduce stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings
- providing patients and consumers with information about their rights and responsibilities
- maintaining existing partnerships, and developing new partnerships, to better meet the needs of people affected by hepatitis B
- continuing to advocate for people in custodial settings to have access to the same means of prevention as those in the community, including health hardware such as sterile injecting equipment.

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WA Hepatitis B Strategy – research, evaluation and surveillance

Understand disease burden

Understanding of the burden of disease attributable to hepatitis B and the associated risk factors will be improved through:

- continuing to make regular epidemiological data available to inform service planning and implementation
- continued support of, and participation in, relevant national research projects.

Evaluate public health response

The public health response to hepatitis B will be evaluated to assess the impact of these programs on decreasing the morbidity and mortality associated with hepatitis B.

Key initiatives will include:

- building organisational competence in evaluating hepatitis B programs and activities
- building research and evaluation into the development of new programs
- sharing research and evaluation findings across the sector to inform future planning and projects.

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Produced by the Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program
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