

Hepatitis B

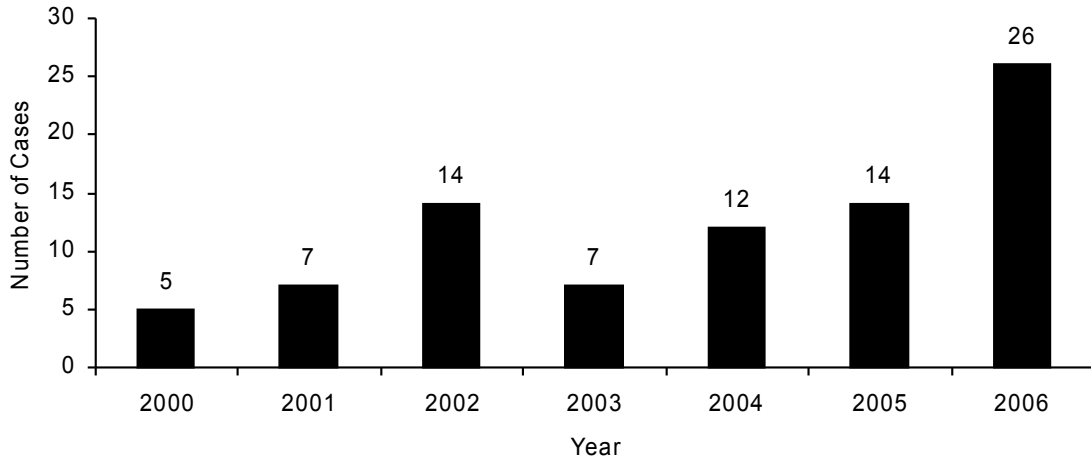
Hepatitis B is a serious viral infection affecting the liver. It is caused by a DNA virus that is transmitted from one person to another through body fluids, such as blood. People can contract the disease from sharing needles and having sex. Babies can contract the disease from their mothers.

In 2006 the case rate for acute hepatitis B in Maine was higher than the United States case rate the year before. Maine's 2006 case rate was 2.0 per 100,000 and the United States case rate was 1.7 in 2005. The rate of acute hepatitis B in the United States decreased 57% from a rate of 3 per 100,000 in 2000 to a rate of 1.7 in 2005. By comparison, the case rate in Maine fluctuated from 0.5 per 100,000 in 2000 to 2.0 in 2006.

At present, efforts continue to focus on prevention, education, evaluating and improving surveillance systems as well as on case management for perinatal hepatitis B. Perinatal refers to infants born to mothers who are infected with hepatitis B. Our goal is to provide universal childhood immunization for hepatitis B by vaccinating all newborn infants with their first dose prior to discharge and completing the hepatitis B series by the time the child reaches 18 months of age. Within the framework of a comprehensive hepatitis plan, the Maine CDC is initiating conversations with healthcare providers, patients, and other stakeholders with the goal of improving reporting practices, increasing vaccine coverage rates among high-risk populations, and targeting education efforts to the most vulnerable populations. The Maine CDC started actively monitoring and reporting probable and confirmed cases of chronic hepatitis B to the federal CDC in July of 2006. Complete data on chronic hepatitis B will be available in the 2007 annual report.

The Maine CDC administers a perinatal hepatitis B project through the Maine Immunization Program, which aims to prevent the spread of hepatitis B from mother to child. The program maintains a statewide registry of pregnant women who are infected with hepatitis B and works with a woman's primary care provider, hospital infection control professionals and the managers of labor and delivery units. The goal is to prevent hepatitis B infections in newborns by ensuring they receive timely immunization and post-vaccination serological testing.

Acute Hepatitis B by Year, Maine, 2000-2006



Incidence of Acute Hepatitis B by Year, Maine and United States, 2000-2006

