

Hepatitis B: prevention and treatment

SOT

David Rzepczynski [rep-SIN-ski], MD, gastroenterologist at OSF HealthCare in Urbana, Illinois

"The majority of people who get exposed to hepatitis B in the adult age – after age 10 – it's typically a condition you recover from without chronic inflammation." (:20)

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"There has been an aggressive program of initiating vaccines with kids, sometimes even as young as infants, to have protection. And when those [vaccines] are administered at a young age, it's a highly effective vaccination. This vaccination has an efficacy of 95%-plus in the general population." (:33)

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"If you stop taking the medicine, it's like taking the brakes off the system. The virus will end up reactivating. And in fact, that reactivation might cause liver failure because the virus level skyrockets. And your body's immune system senses that and starts attacking the liver to get rid of the virus. And that can lead to very serious and acute inflammation of the liver." (:37)

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"Unfortunately, some of these powerful cancer agents also have the ability to affect the immune system in such a way that a person who's had hepatitis B and maybe even has gotten over it can have a reactivation of hepatitis B when these particular agents are used." (:23)