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# Northern Mariana Islands: Hepatitis B

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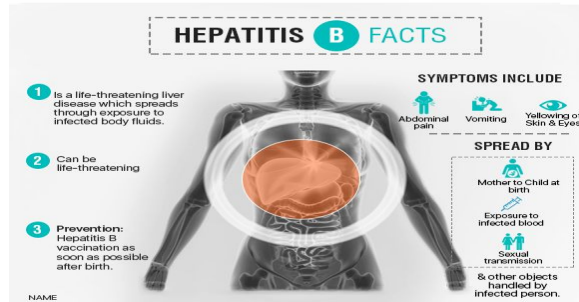
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<https://sablan.house.gov/our-district>

**Background:** The Northern Mariana Islands are a chain of 15 islands including Saipan, Tinian and Rota in the northwestern Pacific Ocean near Indonesia and Guam. The population consists of approximately 52,000 people, who are mostly of Asian and Spanish origin, the majority of whom are Roman Catholic. The Northern Mariana Islands are a United States Commonwealth, making it a constitutional republic (U.S. Department of the Interior). The languages spoken include English, Carolinian and Chamorro. Although the Northern Mariana Islands afford a very peaceful life, in recent years they have encountered economic challenges; however, that being said, their booming garment industry has afforded some fiscal relief (Office, U. G. 2007, February 08).

**What is it?** Research relative to health issues in this area proved difficult as the nation is generally quite healthy, and lacks occurrences of natural disasters, massive disease outbreaks, etc. However, Hepatitis B appears to be a very detrimental disease on these islands. One of the more alarming aspects about this disease is that it can frequently affect any group, as long as the virus infects the bloodstream (Shepard). The populace which seems to be most at risk include drug users, diabetics, and people who engage in sexual activities with multiple partners. Hepatitis B can cause symptomology ranging from mild pain in the abdomen to chronic liver failure and death. (Rui-Hong)



Hepatitis B. (n.d.). Retrieved February 04, 2018, from <http://www.aillbsindia.com/what-is-hepatitis-b/>

**Interventions:** To assist in attempting to alleviate this ongoing health issue in the Northern Mariana Islands, multiple vaccination programs have been utilized. To protect the youngest members of the population while, at the same time, quashing this disease before exposure to risk-factor behaviors, all children on the Islands are vaccinated against Hepatitis B within their first 24-hours of life to help create immunity to the illness. This was considered an extraordinary public health milestone according to Dr. Shin Young-Soo, who also went on to say that the vaccinations can help to end future hepatitis outbreaks by decreasing risk to almost 1% (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands achieves hepatitis B milestone. (n.d.). This vaccination initiatives have caused the prevalence of Hepatitis B to drop significantly.

**Preventions:** Aside from the early-intervention vaccination programs, it would appear prudent to encourage the dissemination of information to the younger population about the dangers and health ramifications of drug abuse and unsafe sexual practices. Not only are these behaviors two of the leading causes of Hepatitis B but they can also contribute to an overall unhealthy lifestyle which thwarts the development of a physically and mentally well-adjusted adult population.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands achieves hepatitis B milestone. (n.d.). Retrieved

January 25, 2018, from <http://www.wpro.who.int/mediacentre/features/20170615/en/>

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. (2017, September 28). Retrieved January 25, 2018, from <https://www.doi.gov/oia/islands/cnmi>

(Office, U. G. (2007, February 08). Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands: Serious

Economic, Fiscal, and Accountability Challenges. Retrieved January 24, 2018, from <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-07-436T>.)

Rui-Hong (2018) *Acute-on-chronic liver failure in chronic hepatitis B: an update*. Retrieved from

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29334786> DOI: [10.1080/17474124.2018.1426459](https://doi.org/10.1080/17474124.2018.1426459)

Shepard, (2006) *Hepatitis B Virus Infection: Epidemiology and Vaccination*. Retrieved from <https://academic.oup.com/epirev/article/28/1/112/570408>