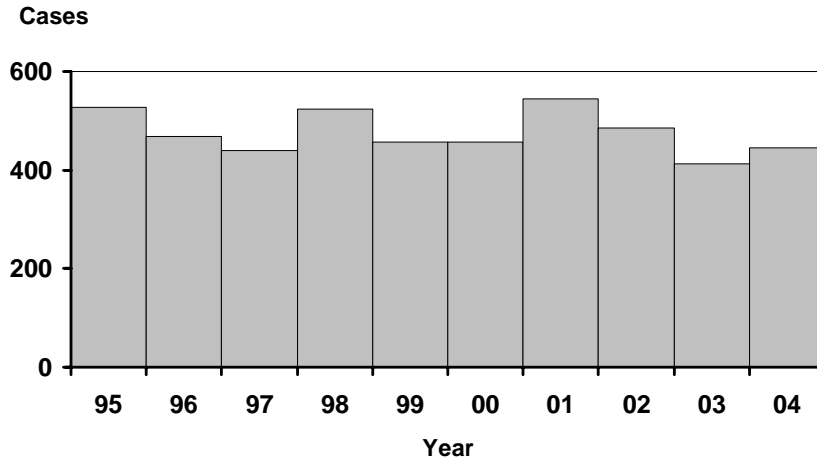


Chronic Hepatitis B

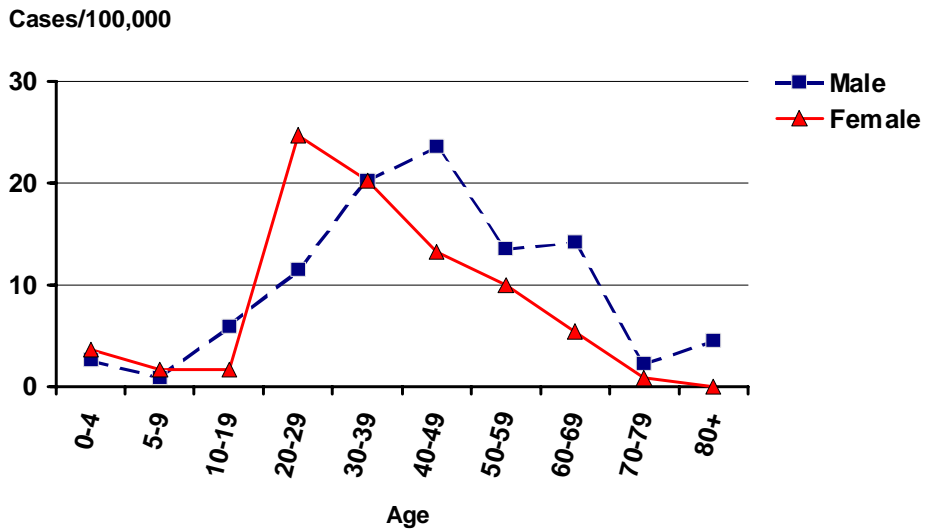
Persons with chronic hepatitis B are known as “chronic carriers” — a state of infection that exists when hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) persists in the blood for more than six months. The likelihood of becoming a chronic carrier is affected by the age at infection. Fewer than 6% of acutely infected adults in the US become carriers, compared to 25% (with HBeAg-negative moms) to 90% (with HBeAg-positive moms) of children infected in early childhood or during birth. Perinatal infection can be prevented by prompt administration of hepatitis B immune globulin and initiation of the three-dose hepatitis B vaccination series. This perinatal intervention is widely practiced in the US — all states have federal funding for perinatal hepatitis B prevention programs — but not in other parts of the world, particularly Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where the prevalence of chronic hepatitis B is higher to begin with. In Oregon, 50% of chronic carriers were born in hepatitis-B-endemic countries. Chronic carriers are at greater risk of developing life-threatening diseases (e.g., chronic active hepatitis, cirrhosis, or liver cancer) decades later. Carriers will sustain transmission of hepatitis B in the US until vaccine-induced immunity is nearly universal.

In 2004, there were 445 newly reported carriers and, as in the past, they were older than acute cases and close to evenly distributed between men and women. Women, however, are diagnosed earlier than men, perhaps due to pre-natal screening. Chronic carriers are not reportable in many of the US states, so a table comparing Oregon to the rest of the US is not given.

Hepatitis B (Chronic) by Year Oregon, 1995–2004



Incidence of Hepatitis B (Chronic) by Age and Sex Oregon, 2004



Incidence of Chronic Hepatitis B by County of Residence, Oregon 2004

