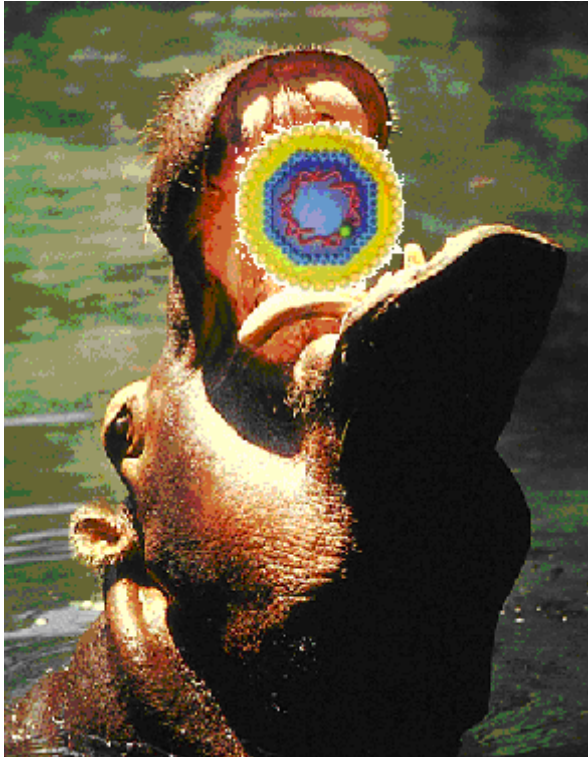


**WANTED:** Hepatitis B Virus

**AKA:** “Hep-Bopotamus” Virus



**GAME ACTION:** Go back two spaces or pretend you're a hippo for 30 seconds – this disease is bad news.

**ONE-LINER:** B-ware of Hep-B!

**PROFILE:** HBV is a mostly double-stranded DNA virus in the *Hepadnaviridae* family, *Orthohepadnavirus* genus. It has the smallest genome, an icosahedral morphology, and enveloped virions.

**POWER:** This silent killer has the power of creating latent or asymptomatic infections. Many chronic hepatitis B carriers have no symptoms and feel healthy. This facilitates the spread of the disease through sexual transmission and from mother-to-child.

**OFFENSES:**

**Attacks:** HBV can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death.

**Outcome:** Without appropriate management and screening, one in four hepatitis B carriers die from liver cancer or cirrhosis.

**Speed:** If symptoms occur, they occur on the average of 12 weeks after exposure to hepatitis B virus. Symptoms occur in about 70% of patients. Symptoms are more likely to occur in adults than in children. Those with chronic infection (about 5% of infections) can die of acute hepatitis within 5 years, or develop liver cancer in 25 to 30 years.

**DEFENSES:**

**Vaccines:** An inactivated Hepatitis B Vaccine has been available since 1982!

**Behavioral:** Safe sex, safe needles, and get vaccinated!

**Treatment:** There is no cure, but symptoms can be treated. The FDA approved Lamivudine in December 1998 for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B in adults.