



HEPATITIS B VACCINE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



1. Why get vaccinated ?

Hepatitis B is a serious disease.

The Hepatitis B virus (HBV) can cause short-term (acute) illness that leads to:

- Loss of appetite.
- Tiredness.
- Diarrhea and vomiting.
- Jaundice (yellow skin or eyes).
- Pain in muscles, joints, and stomach.

It can also cause long-term (chronic) illness that leads to:

- Liver damage (cirrhosis).
- Liver cancer.
- Death.

***Hepatitis B vaccine can prevent Hepatitis B.
It is the first anti-cancer vaccine because it can also prevent
a form of liver cancer.***

2. How is Hepatitis B virus spread ?

Hepatitis B virus is spread through contact with the blood and bodily fluids of an infected person. A person can get infected in several ways, such as:

- If you receive an unscreened blood transfusion or blood fractions like vaccinations, immunoglobulins, clotting factor concentrates...
- If healthcare professionals (Dentists, Doctors, Nurses, Laboratories... do not use using single use / disposable equipment (injection needles / syringes) or if the equipment isn't properly sterilized (Dental equipments / surgical instruments / endoscopes).
- By being pricked with a used needle (i.e. laboratories) or razor blade (i.e. barber shops or hairdressers).
- By having unprotected sex with an infected person.
- During birth when the virus passes from an infected mother to her baby.
- By sharing needles when injecting illegal drugs.

3. Who should get Hepatitis B vaccine and when ?

- Everyone

***In Afghanistan Hepatitis B is widely spread.
The risk of getting infected with Hepatitis B is high.***

Adults at risk for HBV infection include:

- Household contacts with persons with chronic HBV infection.
- People who have more than one sex partner in 6 months.
- Sexual contact with infected people.
- People who inject illegal drugs.
- Health care and public safety workers who might be exposed to infected blood or bodily fluids.

People should get 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine to reach a complete immunization for 10 years.
Adolescents 11 to 15 years of age may need only 2 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine, separated by 4-6 months.
Ask your health care provider for details.

Hepatitis B vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

4. Some people should not get Hepatitis B vaccine or should wait:

- People should not get Hepatitis B vaccine if they have ever had a life-threatening ***allergic reaction to baker's yeast*** (the kind used for making bread) or to a ***previous dose of Hepatitis B vaccine***.
- People who are moderately or severely ill at the time the shot is scheduled should wait until they recover before getting a Hepatitis B vaccine.

5. What are the risks from Hepatitis B vaccine ?

A vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. ***The risk of Hepatitis B vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.***

Getting Hepatitis B vaccine is much safer than getting the disease
Most people who get Hepatitis B vaccine do not have any problems with it.

Mild problems:

- Soreness where the shot was given, lasting a day or two (approximately 1 out of 11 children and adolescents, and approximately 1 out of 4 adults).
- Mild to moderate fever (approximately 1 out of 14 children and adolescents, and 1 out of 100 adults).

If these problems occur, they usually last for 1 or 2 days.

Severe problems:

- serious allergic reaction (*very rare*).

6. What if there is a moderate or severe reaction ?

What should I look for?

- Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

What should I do?

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.

7. How can I learn more ?

- Ask your doctor or nurse. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Contact the American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
Visit CDC websites at: www.cdc.gov/nip