



Hepatitis B (HB)

What is the HB vaccine?

The HB vaccine is a safe and effective way to keep you and your child from getting very sick from the real disease. It is approved by Health Canada. The HB vaccine is made with a tiny amount of dead germs. Vaccines help the immune system learn how to protect itself against the real disease.

Is Hepatitis B serious?

Hepatitis B is a virus that attacks the liver. It can cause serious complications, including permanent liver damage (cirrhosis). Hepatitis B is also the main cause of liver cancer, which can be fatal.

Most adults that are infected with the virus recover within 3 months, but some can carry this infection for the rest of their lives. A younger person is more likely to be infected for life.

How is this disease spread?

Hepatitis B virus is found in the body fluids of infected people, including:

- Blood,
- Semen and vaginal fluids, and
- Saliva.

The best way to protect you and your child against hepatitis B is to get the HB vaccine. Everyone should get this vaccine.

The virus is spread by sharing body fluids with an infected person. This can happen by:

- Sharing personal items (razors, toothbrush),
- Reusing needles,
- Sharing piercings or tattoo equipment, or
- Having unprotected sex.

An infected mother can pass the hepatitis B virus to her baby.



Why should you or your child get the HB vaccine?

Immunization is the best way to protect you and your child against hepatitis B.

When you or your child is immunized you also help protect others. Someone who is vaccinated is less likely to spread infection.

When pregnant women and those around her are immunized they protect the newborn baby from getting hepatitis B.

What are the possible reactions to the HB vaccine?

Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. Most people who get the HB vaccine do not have any reactions.

Possible signs of reactions to the vaccine include:

- Soreness,
- Redness, and
- Swelling where the vaccine was given.

Other signs include:

- Fever,
- Fatigue,
- Muscle or joint aches, and
- Headache.

These are mild reactions and usually last one to two days.

Who should NOT get the HB vaccine?

Speak to your health care provider.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol® and Tempra®) can be given for fever or soreness.

ASA (Aspirin®) should **NEVER** be given to children because it can cause a severe liver and brain disease called Reye's Syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is a rare possibility of a severe allergic reaction. This can include: hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips.

If this happens after you leave the clinic, call or go to the nearest Emergency Department or your local health centre for immediate treatment.

Report any serious or unexpected side-effects to your public health nurse.

Who should get the HB vaccine?

HB vaccine is given as a series of 3 shots according to the following schedule:

SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN (17 or under)						
Vaccine	Age					
	Birth	1 mos.	2 mos.	6 mos.	1-5 years	6-17 years
HB	✓	✓		✓		

Those not immunized as an infant can receive this vaccine as a series of three doses given at 0, 1 and 6 months.

To find out more about the HB vaccine contact your local health centre to speak to your public health nurse or visit the following links:

- [NWT Immunization Schedule:](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca)
<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>
- [Immunize Canada:](https://immunize.ca)
<https://immunize.ca>
- To keep track of your family's immunizations on your smart phone or tablet and to receive vaccine schedule reminders please download the [CANImmunize App](https://www.canimmunize.ca) at:
<https://www.canimmunize.ca>

Your local health care centre is located at the address below.

Place Health Centre
contact information
here.