

Hepatitis B infant vaccine

**Keep your child safe.
Get all vaccines on time.**

By getting all the vaccines on time, your child can be protected from many diseases over a lifetime.

Immunization has saved more lives in Canada in the last 50 years than any other health measure.

What is the hepatitis B vaccine?

The hepatitis B vaccine protects against the hepatitis B virus. The vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

The hepatitis B vaccine is provided free as part of your child's routine immunizations. Call your health care provider to make an appointment.

Who should get the hepatitis B vaccine?

The vaccine is given to babies as a series of 3 doses at 2, 4 and 6 months of age. It is usually combined with other childhood vaccines such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #105 Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B, polio, and Haemophilus influenzae type b \(DTaP-HB-IPV-Hib\) vaccine](#).

Hepatitis B Vaccine	Child's Age at Immunization
1 st dose	2 months
2 nd dose	4 months
3 rd dose	6 months

Some babies are at greater risk of being infected with hepatitis B virus and need to be immunized at birth. For more information, see [HealthLinkBC File #25d Protecting your baby against hepatitis B at birth](#).

It is important to keep a record of all immunizations received.

What are the benefits of the hepatitis B vaccine?

The hepatitis B vaccine is the best way to protect your child against hepatitis B and its complications, including permanent liver damage, which can lead to liver cancer and death.

When you get your child immunized, you help protect others as well.

What are the possible reactions after the vaccine?

Vaccines are very safe. It is much safer for your child to get the vaccine than to get hepatitis B.

Common reactions to the vaccine may include soreness, swelling or redness where the vaccine was given. Some children may experience fever, fussiness or fatigue.

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) or ibuprofen* (e.g. Advil®) can be given for fever or soreness. ASA (e.g. Aspirin®) should not be given to anyone under 18 years of age due to the risk of Reye syndrome.

*Ibuprofen should not be given to children under 6 months of age without first speaking to your health care provider.

For more information on Reye syndrome, see [HealthLinkBC File #84 Reye syndrome](#).

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting any vaccine because there is an extremely rare possibility, less than 1 in a million, of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. Should this reaction occur, your health care provider is prepared to treat it. Emergency treatment includes administration of epinephrine (adrenaline) and transfer by ambulance to the nearest emergency department. If symptoms develop after you leave the clinic, call **9-1-1** or the local emergency number.

It is important to always report serious or unexpected reactions to your health care provider.

Who should not get the hepatitis B vaccine?

Speak with your health care provider if your child has had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine, or any component of the vaccine, including yeast or to latex.

There is no need to delay getting immunized because of a cold or other mild illness. However, if you have concerns speak with your health care provider.

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a virus that attacks the liver. It can cause serious health problems including liver damage (cirrhosis). Hepatitis B is also one of the main causes of liver cancer, which can be fatal. Hepatitis B virus is spread from one infected person to another by contact with blood or body fluids. The virus may also be spread by using items that have blood on them, such as a toothbrush, razor, or needles used for injecting drugs, and by having unprotected sex with someone infected with the virus.

Mothers who are infected with hepatitis B virus can pass the virus to their newborn babies during delivery. When infants are infected with hepatitis B virus, they often do not have symptoms but most will stay infected for life. This is why it is important to protect your child by getting them immunized at a young age.



BC Centre for Disease Control
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority