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### HEPATITIS INFORMATION SHEET

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#### WHY GET VACCINATED

Hepatitis B is a serious disease that affects the liver. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis B can cause mild illness lasting a few weeks, or it can lead to a serious, lifelong illness.

Hepatitis B virus infection can be either acute or chronic.

**Acute hepatitis B virus infection** is a short-term illness that occurs within the first 6 months after someone is exposed to the hepatitis B virus. This can lead to:

- fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, and/or vomiting
- jaundice (yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements)
- pain in muscles, joints, and stomach

**Chronic hepatitis B virus infection** is a long-term illness that occurs when the hepatitis B virus remains in a person's body. Most people who go on to develop chronic hepatitis B do not have symptoms, but it is still very serious and can lead to:

- liver damage (cirrhosis)
- liver cancer
- death

Chronically-infected people can spread hepatitis B virus to others, even if they do not feel or look sick themselves. Up to 1.4 million people in the United States may have chronic hepatitis B infection. About 90% of infants who get hepatitis B become chronically infected and about 1 out of 4 die. Hepatitis B is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluid infected with the Hepatitis B virus enters the body of a person who is not infected. People can become infected with the virus through:

- Birth (a baby whose mother is infected can be infected at or after birth)

- Sharing items such as razors or toothbrushes with an infected person
- Contact with the blood or open sores of an infected person
- Sex with an infected partner
- Sharing needles, syringes, or other drug-injection equipment
- Exposure to blood from needles or other sharp instruments

Each year about 2,000 people in the United States die from hepatitis B-related liver disease.

**Hepatitis B vaccine** can prevent hepatitis B and its consequences, including liver cancer and cirrhosis.

#### THE HEPATITIS VACCINE

Hepatitis B vaccine is made from parts of the hepatitis B virus. It cannot cause hepatitis B infection. The vaccine is usually given as 2, 3, or 4 shots over 1 to 6 months.

**Infants** should get their first dose of hepatitis B vaccine at birth and complete the series at 6 months of age.

All **children and adolescents** younger than 19 years of age who have not yet gotten the vaccine should also be vaccinated.

Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for unvaccinated **adults** who are at risk for hepatitis B virus infection, including:

- People whose sex partners have hepatitis B
- Sexually active persons who are not in a long-term monogamous relationship
- Persons seeking evaluation or treatment for a sexually transmitted disease
- Men who have sexual contact with other men
- People who share needles, syringes, or other drug-injection equipment
- People who have household contact with someone infected with the hepatitis B virus

- Health care and public safety workers at risk for exposure to blood or body fluids
- Residents and staff of facilities for developmentally disabled persons
- Persons in correctional facilities
- Victims of sexual assault or abuse
- Travelers to regions with increased rates of hepatitis B
- People with chronic liver disease, kidney disease, HIV infection, or diabetes
- Anyone who wants to be protected from hepatitis B

There are no known risks to getting the hepatitis B vaccine at the same time as other vaccines.

#### CONTRAINDICATIONS TO GETTING THE HEPATITIS B VACCINE

Some people should not get the Heb-B vaccine. Contraindications include:

- The person getting the vaccine has severe, life-threatening allergies. If you ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction after a dose of hepatitis B vaccine, or have a severe allergy to any part of this vaccine, you may be advised not to get vaccinated. Ask your health care provider for information about vaccine components.
- The person getting the vaccine is not feeling well. If you have a mild illness, such as a cold, you can probably proceed with getting vaccinated. If you are moderately or severely ill, you should probably wait until you recover. Your doctor can advise you.

#### RISKS OF VACCINE REACTION

With any medicine, including vaccines, there is a chance of side effects. These are usually mild and go away on their own, but serious reactions are also possible.

Most people who get hepatitis B vaccine do not experience side effects.

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Minor problems following hepatitis B vaccine include:

- soreness where the shot was given
- temperature of 99.9°F or higher If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1 or 2 days. Your doctor can tell you more about these reactions.

Other problems that could happen after this vaccine:

People sometimes faint after a medical procedure, including vaccination. Sitting or lying down for about 15 minutes can help prevent fainting and injuries caused by a fall. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy, or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.

Some people get shoulder pain that can be more severe and longer-lasting than the more routine soreness that can follow injections. This happens very rarely.

Any medication can cause a severe allergic reaction. Such reactions from a vaccine are very rare, estimated at about 1 in a million doses, and would happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a serious injury or death.

The safety of vaccines is always being monitored. For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html>

\* Vaccine Information Statement Hepatitis B Vaccine 10/12/2018 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-26 :U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention