Hepatitis B Vaccine

What is it?

- In Canada, there are two types of hepatitis B vaccines available; one that protects against hepatitis B only, and one that protects against hepatitis A and hepatitis B (e.g., Twinrix®).
- The Durham Region Health Department provides the hepatitis B vaccine to those who are eligible. Twinrix® is available through your healthcare provider for a fee.
- Hepatitis B vaccine protects against hepatitis B, an infectious disease caused by a virus that attacks and can permanently damage your liver.
- 50% of adults and 90% of children may not know that they have been infected with hepatitis B, as they will not show any symptoms. (For more information, see Facts About…hepatitis B).

Who should receive the vaccine?

- Routine hepatitis B immunization is recommended for all children.
- Infants, young children and immunocompromised persons are at highest risk of becoming lifelong carriers of the virus and will be able to spread it to others.

Hepatitis B vaccination is also recommended for the following people:

- People at risk for exposure to hepatitis B related to their job (e.g., healthcare workers, emergency service workers)
- Residents and staff of an institution for the developmentally challenged
- Men who have sexual contact with men
- People who have unprotected sex with new partners, multiple sexual partners, a recent history of sexually transmitted infection, or those who take part in risky sexual activities
- Injection drug users
- Hemophiliacs and others who receive repeated infusions of blood or blood products
- Hemodialysis patients
- Staff and inmates of correctional facilities

For more information
Durham Region Health Department
905-666-6241  1-800-841-2729  durham.ca
If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.
Hepatitis B Vaccine

- Household and sexual contacts of acute cases or carriers of the hepatitis B virus
- Populations or communities in which hepatitis B disease is very common
- Children less than 7 years old whose families have moved to Canada from countries where hepatitis B is very common, and who may have contact with hepatitis B carriers through their extended families
- Travelers to areas where hepatitis B disease is very common
- Children in child care settings in which there is a child or worker who has acute hepatitis B
- Infants born to a mother who is a hepatitis B carrier
- People with chronic liver disease from any cause
- People who have undergone stem cell transplantation
- Any person who wishes to lower their risk of hepatitis B

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization acknowledges that pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers can receive hepatitis B vaccine without safety concerns. However, the benefits and potential risks of vaccination should be discussed with a healthcare provider.

What is the schedule for the vaccine?

For grade 7 students who have not been previously immunized for hepatitis B, please see the schedule below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Dose 1</th>
<th>Dose 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recombivax®</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>4 months later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engerix®-B</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>6 months later</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For grade 7 students who have been previously immunized for hepatitis B (e.g. Recombivax® or Engerix®-B or Twinrix®), please see the preferred schedule below according to the Canadian Immunization Guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Dose 1</th>
<th>Dose 2</th>
<th>Dose 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recombivax®</td>
<td>0-19 years</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>1 month later</td>
<td>5 months after second dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engerix®-B</td>
<td>0-19 years</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>1 month later</td>
<td>5 months after second dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twinrix® Junior</td>
<td>1-18 years</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>1 month later</td>
<td>5 months after second dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twinrix®</td>
<td>1-15 years</td>
<td>Initial dose</td>
<td>6-12 months later N/A</td>
<td>over . . .</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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• If you have started the hepatitis A/B vaccine (e.g., Twinrix®) or hepatitis B vaccine with your healthcare provider and have not received all the doses, it is recommended that you complete the vaccine series through your healthcare provider. Alternatively, you may choose to receive the hepatitis B vaccine through Durham Region Health Department immunization clinics.

• Each dose gives a small amount of vaccine that allows your body to produce more fighting cells (antibodies) against the hepatitis B virus.

• Routine booster shots are not recommended at this time. The hepatitis B vaccine may be given at the same time as other routine vaccine(s) but at a different site with a separate syringe.

• **Hepatitis B vaccine is NOT free through your healthcare provider.**

According to the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the following people are eligible to receive publically funded (free) hepatitis B vaccine:

• Infants born to a mother who is a hepatitis B carrier

• Household and sexual contacts of chronic carriers and acute cases of hepatitis B

• Persons on renal dialysis and those with diseases requiring frequent receipt of blood products (e.g., haemophilia) (second and third doses only)

• People waiting for liver transplants (second and third doses only)

• Injection drug users

• Men who have sex with men, individuals with multiple sexual partners, or history of a sexually transmitted infection

• Those having needle stick injuries in a non-health care setting

• Children less than 7 years old whose families have moved to Canada from countries of high incidence of hepatitis B, and who may have contact with hepatitis B carriers through their extended families

• Persons with chronic liver disease including hepatitis C

• Grade 7 students who attend school in Ontario through school immunization clinics

**How effective is the Hepatitis B Vaccine?**

• There is no cure for hepatitis B infection but it can be prevented.

• Hepatitis B vaccine is 95% to 100% effective in preventing hepatitis B in people who receive a complete vaccine series.

• Hepatitis B vaccine is not effective for prevention of hepatitis A or hepatitis C infections.
Are there side effects with the vaccine?

- The most common reported side effects are:
  - Redness, pain and swelling where the needle was given
  - Headache
  - Fatigue

- Side effects are usually mild and last only a short time. A cold, wet compress applied to the injection site and/or acetaminophen can be used to help relieve pain, swelling, and/or mild fever after vaccination.

- Severe allergic reactions after vaccination are very rare and may not be related to the vaccine. However, if you think a serious reaction is developing, seek medical attention right away. Any unusual or significant changes in your health or your child’s health after the immunization should be reported to a health care provider and the Health Department.

Who should NOT get the vaccine?

- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction (called anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine.
- People who are sick with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold should wait until they feel better before getting the hepatitis B vaccine.
- If you have any medical conditions, discuss the vaccine with a healthcare provider to determine if you should receive it.
- People who are pregnant or breastfeeding should discuss the need for hepatitis B vaccine with their healthcare provider before vaccination.
- Any component in a vaccine may be a potential allergen. The most common for hepatitis B are:
  - Latex (in the rubber stopper of Recombivax® vaccine), is eligible for the alternative Engerix®-B vaccine which is free of latex
  - Yeast


Don’t forget to update your record of protection

After you or your child receives a vaccine, update your immunization record (yellow card). For children in school or daycare, please call the Health Department to update your child’s immunization records. Keep your records in a safe place!

July 22, 2016

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