



# Hepatitis B Vaccine

## What is it?

Hepatitis B (HB) vaccine protects against liver infection caused by the HB virus. For more information, see [Facts About...Hepatitis B](#).

There are several types of HB vaccines available in Canada. There are types that protect against HB virus only, and there are combination vaccines that protect against HB virus and other diseases. Talk to your health care provider for more information.

## How effective is the vaccine?

- HB can be prevented 95% to 100% of the time when the vaccine series is completed.
- The vaccine does not protect people who are already infected with HB.

## Who should get the vaccine?

The following people can receive the **HB vaccine for free** as per the current [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario](#):

- Grade 7 and 8 students through the school-based immunization program.
- Eligible students who initiated their HB vaccine series at a DRHD clinic prior to the end of their grade 12 year (August 31) can complete their series for free with one or more doses of the HB vaccine(s) at a DRHD clinic.
- People who are at increased risk of HB virus because of chronic health issues.
- People who are in contact with someone with HB virus.

People who are or who come from an area where HB virus is widespread should talk to their health care provider about getting the vaccine. The vaccine may be recommended for others who want to decrease their risk of HB virus, however, the vaccine would have to be purchased. Check with your health care provider to see if you should be immunized.

## What is the schedule for the vaccine?

- HB vaccine is routinely given to students 11 to 15 years of age as two doses, 6 months apart, as part of the grade 7 school-based immunization program.
- Certain populations and those who receive the vaccine when they are 16 years of age or older require 3 doses: 0, 1 and 6-months apart.
- Routine booster doses are not recommended if the vaccine series has been completed.

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## Are there side effects with the vaccine?

- HB vaccine is safe and well tolerated. Side effects are usually mild and last a short time.
- The most common side effects are injection site reaction (pain, redness, and/or swelling), irritability, headache, fatigue and/or low-grade fever.
- 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?

If you have a severe allergy (anaphylaxis) to any previous vaccine(s) or to any part of the vaccine. For more information on contents of the vaccine, refer to the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#).

## Don't forget to update your immunization record!

For children in school or childcare, update the Health Department of your child's immunization(s). Health care providers do not routinely report immunizations to the Health Department.

- After you or your child receives a vaccine, update your immunization record (yellow card). Keep your records in a safe place.
- You can view immunizations online using the [Immunization Connect Ontario \(ICON\) tool](#) (also found at [durham.ca/immunize](http://durham.ca/immunize)). You have the option of uploading a photo of the record.
- Call the Health Department at 1-800-841-2729 or 905-666-6242 to provide the dates that the vaccines were received.

\*Parents must contact the Health Department if you object to immunization based on conscience or religious beliefs, or if your child cannot be immunized for medical reasons.

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