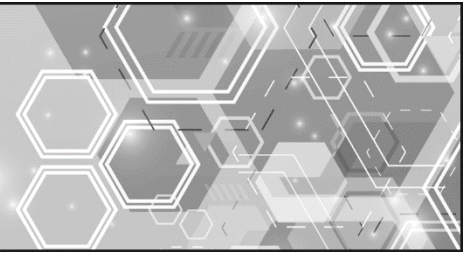




Durham Region Health Department Facts about...



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 (e.g., ENGERIX-B and RECOMBIVAX HB®), and there are combination vaccines that protect against the HB virus and other diseases (e.g., TWINRIX). 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 HB vaccine is approved and recommended for children under 18 years of age, and to adults over 18 years of age who are at higher risk. The following people can receive the **HB vaccine for free**:

- Grade 7 and 8 students through the school-based immunization program.
- Students who started their HB vaccine series at a Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) clinic before the end of their grade 12 year (August 31) can complete their series for free at a DRHD clinic.
- People who are at increased risk of getting the HB virus because of chronic health issues or lifestyle factors.
- People who are in contact with someone who has the HB virus.

People who are or who come from an area where the 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 getting the HB virus, however, the vaccine would have to be purchased. Check with your health care provider to see if you should be immunized.

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What is the schedule for the vaccine?

- HB vaccine is routinely given to students 11 to 15 years of age as two doses, 0 and 4-6 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 at 0, 1 and 6 months apart.
- Routine booster doses are not recommended if the vaccine series has been completed.

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 previously completed a HB containing vaccine series.
- If you have a severe allergy (anaphylaxis) to any previous vaccine(s) or to any part of the vaccine.
- If you are sick with a high fever or serious infection worse than a cold, you should wait until to get the vaccine until you feel better.

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 child care, inform Durham Region Health Department of your child's vaccine. Health care providers do not report vaccines to the Health Department automatically. Keep your records updated and in a safe place.

After your child receives a vaccine, update Durham Region Health Department:

- Online at durham.ca/immunize (you may also attach a photo of your record).
- By calling 1-800-841-2729 or 905-666-6242.
- By faxing your vaccine/immunization record to 905-666-6216.

The [Immunization Connect Ontario \(ICON\)](#) tool allows you to see your child's vaccine/immunization record online anytime.

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