

PROTECTION FROM HEPATITIS B (ADULT)

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a vaccine-preventable liver disease caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). Many people who become infected with HBV never feel sick and recover completely. Others get a brief, acute illness with tiredness, fever, loss of appetite and jaundice (yellow skin and eyes). Less than 5% of adults who get acute hepatitis B develop chronic hepatitis, which can lead to cirrhosis (liver scarring) and/or liver cancer later in life. People with acute and chronic Hepatitis B disease can pass the infection on to others. Chronic hepatitis B infection is not curable but can be managed by your health care provider.

How is Hepatitis B spread?

Hepatitis B can be spread by close contact with blood and body fluids such as blood, semen, and vaginal fluid of an infected person. You may risk exposure to hepatitis B through unprotected sex, tattoos, piercings, pedicures, manicures or medical procedures with improperly sterilized equipment, sharing personal hygiene items with an infected person (e.g. razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers). A mother may also pass the virus on to her baby during childbirth.

Why do we recommend vaccination for Hepatitis B?

The hepatitis B vaccine is the best way to prevent infection before exposure to the Hepatitis B virus. The vaccination schedule for adults consists of 3 scheduled doses over a six month period.

Who should NOT get Hepatitis B vaccine?

Anyone who has had a severe allergic reaction to any contents of the vaccine or a previous dose of this vaccine should not receive this vaccine.

Is the Hepatitis B Vaccine safe?

All vaccines recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Provincial Department of Health and Community Services such as this one are safe and effective.

What are the vaccine's common side effects?

The most common side effects include soreness, swelling and/or redness at the injection site, slight fever, headache, tiredness or irritability. Serious side effects are rare and should be reported to the community/public health nurse.

Is this vaccine mandatory?

The vaccine is not mandatory but is highly recommended for protection against preventable disease.

**For additional information and
services contact the Regional Health
Authority in your community**