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VACCINE INFORMATION STATEMENT

## Hepatitis B Vaccine

**What You Need to Know**

Check Vaccine Information Statements on vaccines in Spanish and other languages for more information.

Print or electronically obtain vaccine information (available in Spanish) at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/vis/](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/vis/)

**1 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 1.6 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 of them 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/sharps or other sharp instruments

Each year about 1,000 people in the United States die from hepatitis B-related liver disease.

MM-319 (2/2016/09)

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

**2 Hepatitis B 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 1 or 4 shots over a 6-month period.

**Infants** should get their first dose of hepatitis B vaccine at birth and will usually 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 hepatitis B vaccine at the same time as other vaccines.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention