

Immunization : Hepatitis B Vaccine for Babies

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a healthcare professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

This vaccine is for babies whose mothers are carriers of hepatitis B.

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver. It is caused by a virus. Most people who get hepatitis B recover completely. Some carry the infection for life and are called carriers.

Carriers may pass on the infection to other people. They may also get liver damage or liver cancer.

Can hepatitis B affect my baby?

Yes. Babies whose mothers are carriers may be infected during birth and also may become carriers. Doctors in Ontario test all pregnant women for hepatitis B. If you are a carrier, a vaccine can protect your baby from infection.

When will my baby get the hepatitis B vaccine?

If you are a carrier your baby will get one needle at birth, and one when a month old. The third needle is given at six months of age. A special needle called immune globulin is also given when your baby is born.

How well does hepatitis B vaccine protect my baby?

The vaccine protects nine out of 10 babies who get all three needles. After the last needle, talk to your doctor about a blood test

for your baby. This test will show how well the vaccine is working.

Is hepatitis B vaccine safe?

Yes. Some babies may have mild pain, swelling or redness where the needle was given. A few get a slight fever or upset stomach. You should always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your doctor.

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor right away if your baby has any of these signs after getting a needle :

- trouble breathing;
- itchy raised blotches;
- swelling of face and mouth;
- high fever (over 40 C or 104 F).

Can others in my family get hepatitis B?

Yes. If you are a carrier, your sexual partner may also need the vaccine. Other people who live in your home may also need the vaccine. It protects children, adolescents and adults from getting hepatitis B.

What if I have more questions about hepatitis B?

Talk to your doctor or, contact your [local public health unit](#).

Your record of protection
After you or your child get any immunization, make sure your doctor updates

your personal immunization record, such as your "Yellow Card." Keep it in a safe place !

Government of Ontario

For information about health services and resources :

www.health.gov.on.ca

For consumer-friendly health tips and information :

www.HealthyOntario.com

INFOline: 1-877-234-4343;

TTY: 1-800-387-5559

Telehealth Ontario:

1-866-797-0000; TTY 1-866-797-0007

INFOline is open during business hours and can provide general information on healthcare.

Telehealth Ontario is a 24/7 service which uses nurse practitioners to answer your immediate health concerns.