



Hepatitis B Recommendations for Health Care Workers

Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for all health care and emergency service workers. In addition to a full series of hepatitis B vaccines these individuals should also have a blood test done to show that they are immune to hepatitis B. In the case of a blood exposure, such as a needlestick, it will be important to know whether or not you are immune to hepatitis B.

What is Hepatitis B?

- It is a disease that affects the liver. Symptoms include fatigue, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, and vomiting; can lead to death in rare cases.
- Hepatitis B is spread through body fluids, such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid, and saliva.
- Anyone who has hepatitis B can spread it to others, whether they feel sick or not.
- In health care settings you can help to reduce your risk of contracting hepatitis B by following routine practices and using personal protective equipment when you are likely to come into contact with blood or body fluids.

Who Should Get Hepatitis B Vaccine?

- All health care workers and emergency service workers should be vaccinated against hepatitis B. People who work in these professions are at an increased risk of exposure to blood and body fluids.

Hepatitis B Vaccine

- The vaccine against hepatitis B is a three dose series. The first dose is administered at your initial visit to your doctor's office or clinic, a second dose is given one month later, and the final dose is given six months after the first.
- Most adults will develop immunity to hepatitis B after the initial vaccine series; however the vaccine is less effective in older adults including those with chronic illnesses such as diabetes or chronic liver disease.

Hepatitis B Titres

- Because not everyone will respond to the vaccine it is recommended that all health care and emergency service workers have a blood test done after they complete their hepatitis B vaccine series to ensure that they are protected.
- Once you have bloodwork that shows immunity to hepatitis B, you will always be immune. Additional blood testing or vaccines are not recommended.
- See the back page of this sheet for more information on hepatitis B titres.





Recommended Hepatitis B Serology for Health Care and Emergency Service Workers

FACT SHEET
www.pdhu.on.ca

