

Hepatitis B Vaccine Information

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis B can cause permanent damage to the liver, liver cancer or death. Symptoms of hepatitis B infection include fatigue, fever, loss of appetite, and jaundice (yellow skin and eyes).

How does hepatitis B spread?

- The virus is found in the blood and body fluids of an infected person and can be spread through sexual contact, sharing toothbrushes or needles with an infected person, and through other exposures to these fluids
- An infected pregnant woman can pass the virus to her unborn child

How can hepatitis B be prevented?

Through vaccination and by avoiding contact with other people's blood and body fluids.

More about the hepatitis B vaccine

In Ontario, all grade 7 students are offered the vaccine at no cost. If your child was already vaccinated with a complete series of hepatitis B vaccine (usually 3 doses as a child or infant), they do not need to be vaccinated again. If your child received less than three doses in the past, they can receive the dose(s) offered in grade 7 to complete their series. If you are unsure if your child was previously vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine, your child should receive the dose(s) offered in grade 7.

If your child misses being vaccinated in grade 7, they can receive hepatitis B vaccine until the end of grade 8 at a York Region Public Health community immunization clinic. Visit york.ca/immunization for clinic information.

Who should NOT get this vaccine at school and should consult their health care provider?

- Those who have had a severe reaction to a vaccine
- Those who have an illness or take any medication that weakens the immune system
- Those who have been previously immunized with a complete series of the hepatitis B vaccine
- Those who have a severe allergy to aluminum, latex, yeast or thimerosal

What are the side effects of this vaccine?

- Some people may experience headache, fatigue, redness, pain and swelling at the injection site that may last about a day. Apply ice to the site and/or take a non-aspirin pain reliever to help minimize pain and/or swelling
- Students are observed for a minimum of 15 minutes after their vaccination to ensure there are no immediate side effects. Anyone who experiences serious health effects after they leave the clinic should consult their health care provider and notify York Region Public Health

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675 ext. 73452
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