



## **Important Information About Hepatitis B, Hepatitis B Vaccine And Hepatitis B Immune Globulin**

### **WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?**

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV is one of several types of viruses (infections) that can cause hepatitis. There is a vaccine that will prevent HBV infection.

Hepatitis B virus infection may occur in two phases. The acute phase occurs just after a person becomes infected, and can last from a few weeks to several months. Some people recover after the acute phase, but others remain infected for the rest of their lives. They go into the chronic phase and become "chronic carriers". The virus remains in their liver and blood.

Acute hepatitis B usually begins with symptoms such as loss of appetite, extreme tiredness, nausea, vomiting, and stomach pain. Dark urine and jaundice (yellow eyes and skin) are also common, and skin rashes and joint pain can occur. Over half of the people who become infected with HBV never become sick, but some may later have long-term liver disease from their HBV infection.

About 300,000 children and adults in the U.S. become infected with the hepatitis B virus each year. More than 10,000 of them need to be hospitalized and 250 die. Most of these deaths are from liver failure.

HBV is passed from one person to another in blood or certain body secretions. This may occur during sexual relations or when sharing things like toothbrushes, razors, or needles used to inject drugs. A baby can get HBV at birth from its mother. A health care worker may get HBV if blood from an infected patient enters through a cut or accidental needle stick.

Those people infected with HBV who become "chronic carriers" can spread the infection to others throughout their lifetime. They can also develop long-term liver disease such as cirrhosis (which destroys the liver) or liver cancer.

### **WHO BECOMES A CHRONIC CARRIER OF HBV?**

Of every 100 young adults who catch HBV, 6 to 10 become chronic carriers. Children who become infected with HBV are more likely to become chronic carriers than adults. Of every 10 infants who are infected at birth, up to 9 will become chronic HBV carriers. The younger a child is when the infection occurs, the more likely that child will become a carrier.

About one-fourth of hepatitis B carriers develop a disease called "chronic active hepatitis". People with chronic active hepatitis often get cirrhosis of the liver, and many die from liver failure. In addition, they are much more likely than other people to get cancer of the liver. In the United States, about 4,000 hepatitis B carriers die each year from cirrhosis and more than 800 die from liver cancer.

### **HEPATITIS B VACCINE AND HEPATITIS B IMMUNE GLOBULIN:**

#### **Hepatitis B Vaccine:**

Hepatitis B vaccine is given by injection. The vaccine is usually given in three doses. (Four doses may be necessary after an exposure). Three doses, given on three different dates, are needed for full protection. Exactly when these doses are given can vary. **The Hepatitis B vaccine only gives protection against Hepatitis B.**

The hepatitis B vaccine prevents HBV infection in 85-95% of the people who get all three shots. Studies have shown that in these people, protection lasts at least 10 years. Booster doses are not recommended at this time.

Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for adolescents and adults at high risk of getting HBV infection. **This includes** 1) people who are exposed to blood or blood products in their work (health care workers or emergency care responders, for instance); 2) clients and staff of institutions for the developmentally disabled, as well as clients and staff of group homes, where any of the residents is a chronic carrier of HBV; 3) hemodialysis patients; 4) men who have sex with men; 5) users of injectable drugs; 6) people with medical conditions (such as hemophilia) who receive blood products to help their blood clots; 7) people

who live with, or have sex with, HBV carriers; 8) people who have more than one sexual partner, or people who are treated for sexually transmitted diseases; and 9) people who travel to, or live in, parts of the world where HBV infections are common.

Hepatitis B vaccine is also recommended for people who have been exposed to HBV. **This includes people who have never been vaccinated for hepatitis B, and who:** (1) have an accident in which blood containing HBV enters their body through the skin or mucous membrane; or, (2) have sexual contact with someone with acute hepatitis B. In some cases, hepatitis B vaccine should be started at the same time as treatment with HBIG (see below).

Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG):

HBIG is often given along with hepatitis B vaccine to people who have been exposed to hepatitis. It gives protection from the virus for the first 1 to 3 months; then the vaccine takes over and gives long lasting protection. HBIG is made from human plasma (a part of the blood). Any viruses found in the blood are killed during its preparation, and no one has ever been known to get hepatitis B or AIDS or any other virus from HBIG. Most people need only one dose to protect them after exposure to HBV.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS FROM HEPATITIS B VACCINE AND HBIG:

The most common side effect of hepatitis B vaccination is soreness at the site of injection. HBIG has sometimes been associated with swelling and hives. As with any drug, there is a slight chance of allergic or more serious reactions with either the vaccine or HBIG. However, no serious reactions have been shown to occur due to the hepatitis B recombinant vaccines. (These are the ones currently in use). A person cannot get hepatitis B or AIDS from a hepatitis B shot or from an HBIG shot.

PREGNANCY:

Very little information is available about the safety of the vaccine or HBIG for unborn babies. If a pregnant woman gets an HBV infection, it can cause severe disease in the mother and chronic HBV infection in the newborn baby. On the other hand, both the vaccine and HBIG should be safe for the unborn baby because they contain no infectious material. Therefore, pregnant women who are otherwise eligible can be given both hepatitis B vaccine and HBIG.

QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions about Hepatitis B, HBIG, or Hepatitis B Vaccine, please ask us now or call your doctor or health department before you sign this form.

REACTIONS:

If the person who received HBIG and/or the vaccine gets sick and visits a doctor, hospital, or clinic during the 4 weeks after receiving the vaccine, please report it to the Medical Suite at 521-1662.

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**I have read, or have had explained to me, the information on this form about Hepatitis B and Hepatitis B vaccine. I have had a chance to ask questions which were answered to my satisfaction. I believe I understand the benefits and the risks of the Hepatitis B vaccine and request that it be given to me.**  
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I consent to receive Hepatitis B Vaccine \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**HEPATITIS B VACCINATION RECORD**

Manufacturer/Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturer/Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_ Manufacturer/Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Dose 1, Date Given: \_\_\_\_\_ Dose 2, Date Given: \_\_\_\_\_ Dose 3, Date Given: \_\_\_\_\_  
Site: \_\_\_\_\_ Site: \_\_\_\_\_ Site: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manufacturer/Lot No. \_\_\_\_\_ Dose 1, Date Given: \_\_\_\_\_ Site: \_\_\_\_\_