

What should you do if your child has a reaction to this vaccine?

- For pain or swelling where the needle was given, apply a cool moist towel to the area for about 15 minutes. Repeat as needed.
- For pain or fever, give acetaminophen (also called Tylenol®) as directed on the container.

Note: Aspirin® (ASA) is not recommended for persons under 18 years of age because of the increased risk of Reye's syndrome.

- Call your local public health office if you have any questions or if there is an unusual reaction to the vaccine.

Talk to a public health nurse or your child's doctor before getting this vaccine, if the child:

- is sick now with something more serious than a cold.
- has severe allergies to any part of the vaccine.
- is severely allergic to any foods, drugs, bee stings, etc.
- has a weakened immune system.

Your child should not get the vaccine if he/she:

- has had a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine or to a component of this vaccine.

Hepatitis B Vaccine

Important information
about this vaccine.

Hepatitis B Vaccine

Immunization Information

Alberta

For more information

Call your local public health office.



What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a virus that attacks the liver. Most people who become infected recover completely. However, from 1% to 10% of older children and adults infected develop chronic (life-long) hepatitis B. Children infected at younger than five years of age have a greater likelihood of developing chronic infection. (The younger the person infected, the more likely the person is to develop chronic infection.)

Chronic hepatitis B can cause permanent liver damage and scarring, and/or liver cancer later in life. Hepatitis B can be spread by contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person. It is uncommon for a child to get hepatitis B. However, exposure of a child to blood or dirty needles in a school yard or playground is possible.

In Alberta, many new cases are the result of sexual relations with an infected person. Hepatitis B can also be spread by injection drug use. An infected mother may pass the disease to a newborn during birth. In most cases of hepatitis B, no obvious source of infection can be found. Hepatitis B is not spread by water, food, sneezing, coughing, or by casual contacts that occur at schools or workplaces.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis B?

Many people infected with hepatitis B do not get sick at all. Others may feel tired, lose their appetite, feel joint pain or pain in the stomach area, and their skin and eyes may turn yellow (jaundice). These symptoms may last weeks or months.

How can hepatitis B infections be prevented?

Avoid sharing personal items like razors and toothbrushes which might have another person's blood on them. Never touch discarded needles.

Hepatitis B vaccine provides long-lasting protection and is one of the best ways to prevent hepatitis B infection.

Who should receive hepatitis B vaccine?

In Alberta, most new cases of hepatitis B occur in young adulthood. Immunization is offered to students in grade five to ensure they are protected well before they become adults.

A series of three injections is provided during the school term to complete your child's hepatitis B immunization.

The vaccine is also provided to other groups considered to be at increased risk for hepatitis B. Talk to your public health nurse for more information.

Hepatitis B

Is the hepatitis B vaccine safe?

Hepatitis B vaccines are well tolerated and safe to administer to individuals of all ages. You cannot get the disease from the vaccine. In Canada, each new vaccine undergoes laboratory and field-testing and must pass a rigorous licensing procedure with the federal

government before it is introduced. Once a vaccine is approved, every lot is tested for safety and quality. In addition, side effects are continuously monitored.

What if your child is allergic to thimerosal or latex?

There are a variety of hepatitis B vaccines available. If your child has a serious allergy to either thimerosal or latex, a vaccine which does not contain that component may be used for your child.

What are the possible side effects of the hepatitis B vaccine?

Reported side effects are usually mild and short-lived. For a day or two, some children may:

- have redness, swelling, or soreness at the place where the needle was given.
- have a slight fever, tiredness, or headache.

As with any immunization, unexpected or unusual side effects can occur. Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) are rare, occurring at an estimated annual rate ranging from 0.4 to 1.8 reports per 1,000,000 doses of vaccines distributed in Canada.