Hepatitis B Vaccine

What You Need to Know

1 What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a serious infection that affects the liver. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus.

• In 2009, about 38,000 people became infected with hepatitis B.
• Each year about 2,000 to 4,000 people die in the United States from cirrhosis or liver cancer caused by hepatitis B.

Hepatitis B can cause:

Acute (short-term) illness. This can lead to:

• loss of appetite
• diarrhea and vomiting
• tiredness
• jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)
• pain in muscles, joints, and stomach

Acute illness, with symptoms, is more common among adults. Children who become infected usually do not have symptoms.

Chronic (long-term) infection. Some people go on to develop chronic hepatitis B infection. Most of them do not have symptoms, but the infection is still very serious, and can lead to:

• liver damage (cirrhosis)
• liver cancer
• death

Chronic infection is more common among infants and children than among adults. People who are chronically infected can spread hepatitis B virus to others, even if they don’t look or feel sick. Up to 1.4 million people in the United States may have chronic hepatitis B infection.

Hepatitis B virus is easily spread through contact with the blood or other body fluids of an infected person. People can also be infected from contact with a contaminated object, where the virus can live for up to 7 days.

• A baby whose mother is infected can be infected at birth;
• Children, adolescents, and adults can become infected by:
  - contact with blood and body fluids through breaks in the skin such as bites, cuts, or sores;
  - contact with objects that have blood or body fluids on them such as toothbrushes, razors, or monitoring and treatment devices for diabetes;
  - having unprotected sex with an infected person;
  - sharing needles when injecting drugs;
  - being stuck with a used needle.

2 Hepatitis B vaccine: Why get vaccinated?

Hepatitis B vaccine can prevent hepatitis B, and the serious consequences of hepatitis B infection, including liver cancer and cirrhosis.

Hepatitis B vaccine may be given by itself or in the same shot with other vaccines.

Routine hepatitis B vaccination was recommended for some U.S. adults and children beginning in 1982, and for all children in 1991. Since 1990, new hepatitis B infections among children and adolescents have dropped by more than 95% – and by 75% in other age groups.

Vaccination gives long-term protection from hepatitis B infection, possibly lifelong.

3 Who should get hepatitis B vaccine and when?

Children and Adolescents

• Babies normally get 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine:
  1st Dose: Birth
  2nd Dose: 1-2 months of age
  3rd Dose: 6-18 months of age

Some babies might get 4 doses, for example, if a combination vaccine containing hepatitis B is used. (This is a single shot containing several vaccines.) The extra dose is not harmful.

• Anyone through 18 years of age who didn’t get the vaccine when they were younger should also be vaccinated.

Adults

• All unvaccinated adults at risk for hepatitis B infection should be vaccinated. This includes:
  - sex partners of people infected with hepatitis B,
  - men who have sex with men,
  - people who inject street drugs,
  - people with more than one sex partner,
  - people with chronic liver or kidney disease,
  - people under 60 years of age with diabetes,
  - people with jobs that expose them to human blood or other body fluids,
- household contacts of people infected with hepatitis B,
- residents and staff in institutions for the developmentally disabled,
- kidney dialysis patients,
- people who travel to countries where hepatitis B is common,
- people with HIV infection.

- Other people may be encouraged by their doctor to get hepatitis B vaccine; for example, adults 60 and older with diabetes. Anyone else who wants to be protected from hepatitis B infection may get the vaccine.

- Pregnant women who are at risk for one of the reasons stated above should be vaccinated. Other pregnant women who want protection may be vaccinated.

Adults getting hepatitis B vaccine should get 3 doses — with the second dose given 4 weeks after the first and the third dose 5 months after the second. Your doctor can tell you about other dosing schedules that might be used in certain circumstances.

### 4 Who should not get hepatitis B vaccine?

- Anyone with a life-threatening allergy to yeast, or to any other component of the vaccine, should not get hepatitis B vaccine. Tell your doctor if you have any severe allergies.

- Anyone who has had a life-threatening allergic reaction to a previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine should not get another dose.

- Anyone who is moderately or severely ill when a dose of vaccine is scheduled should probably wait until they recover before getting the vaccine.

Your doctor can give you more information about these precautions.

Note: You might be asked to wait 28 days before donating blood after getting hepatitis B vaccine. This is because the screening test could mistake vaccine in the bloodstream (which is not infectious) for hepatitis B infection.

### 5 What are the risks from hepatitis B vaccine?

Hepatitis B is a very safe vaccine. Most people do not have any problems with it.

The vaccine contains non-infectious material, and cannot cause hepatitis B infection.

Some mild problems have been reported:

- Soreness where the shot was given (up to about 1 person in 4).
- Temperature of 99.9°F or higher (up to about 1 person in 15).

Severe problems are extremely rare. Severe allergic reactions are believed to occur about once in 1.1 million doses.

A vaccine, like any medicine, could cause a serious reaction. But the risk of a vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small. More than 100 million people in the United States have been vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine.

### 6 What if there is a moderate or severe reaction?

**What should I look for?**

- Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or unusual behavior. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

**What should I do?**

- **Call** a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- **Tell** your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- **Ask** your doctor, nurse, or health department to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form. Or you can file this report through the VAERS web site at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov), or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

**VAERS does not provide medical advice.**

### 7 The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) was created in 1986.

Persons who believe they may have been injured by a vaccine can learn about the program and about filing a claim by calling 1-800-338-2382 or visiting the VICP website at [www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation](http://www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation).

### 8 How can I learn more?

- Ask your doctor They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
  - Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO) or
  - Visit CDC’s website at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines)

**Vaccine Information Statement (Interim)**

**Hepatitis B Vaccine**

2/2/2012

42 U.S.C. § 300aa-26
Hepatitis B Vaccination Waiver/Consent Form

Name (Please Print):___________________________

Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY): ___________________________

Complete only one section (A, B, or C)

Section A. Consent for Hepatitis B Vaccine

I, ___________________________, consent to be immunized against Hepatitis B. I acknowledge the following.

• I have been informed that I am at risk of acquiring Hepatitis B because of the nature of my professional responsibilities.
• I have read the information sheet that lists the indications, benefits, and presently known side effects of Hepatitis B vaccine, have had the opportunity to ask questions, and have had them answered to my satisfaction.
• I must receive three (3) doses of vaccine over a period of six (6) months to confer optimal immunity.
• I understand, however, as with all medical treatment, there is no guarantee that I will become immune or that I will not experience an adverse reaction to the vaccine.
• In the event that I experience any adverse side effects or do not become immune from the vaccine I hereby hold Southern State Community College harmless from any and all liability to the extent permitted under law.
• In the event that I should terminate employment at Southern State Community College prior to receiving all three (3) doses of the Hepatitis B vaccine, I understand that it will be my responsibility to complete the vaccination series on my own initiative and at my own expense.

Employee Signature:______________________   Date:_______________

Section B. Previous Immunization with Hepatitis B Vaccine

I, ___________________________, have previously completed a three-dose series of the Hepatitis B Vaccine in (year)__________________.

Employee Signature:______________________   Date:_______________

Section C. Refusal to Receive Hepatitis B Vaccine

I understand that due to my occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials I may be at risk of acquiring Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. I have been given the opportunity to be vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine, at no charge to myself. However, I decline Hepatitis B vaccination at this time. I understand that by declining this vaccine, I continue to be at risk of acquiring Hepatitis B, a serious disease. If in the future I continue to have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials and I want to be vaccinated with Hepatitis B vaccine, I can receive the vaccination series at no charge to me.

Employee Signature:______________________   Date:_______________