

Hepatitis B Vaccine

What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a virus that affects the liver. The virus can cause inflammation, damage or cancer of the liver. Hepatitis B spreads through blood and body fluids.

There is no cure for hepatitis B. Most people that get sick with hepatitis B will get well. However, about 10 per cent of people infected will have the virus for life and can keep infecting other people. Therefore, immunization to prevent hepatitis B is important.

How is hepatitis B spread?

Hepatitis B is contagious. The virus spreads through contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person. In Canada, it spreads mainly spread through unprotected sexual contact. Other ways it can spread include body/ear piercing or tattooing with infected equipment, sharing used needles. An infected mother can spread it to her baby at birth. Saliva can spread the virus in a bite wound with broken skin.

What are the symptoms of the disease?

Some symptoms include jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), fever, tiredness, weakness, loss of appetite and/or pain. However, some people (especially children) may not have any symptoms and therefore can infect others without knowing it.

Why should my student get this vaccine?

- 1. Effective:** Hepatitis B vaccine works very well. Two doses will protect 98 per cent or more of students aged 11-15.
- 2. Age appropriate:** The teenage years are times when young people are more likely to try activities that increase the risk of infection. This is why it is important that youth get the vaccine before this stage.
- 3. Careers and schools:** Your student may need this vaccine to go to college or university. Your student may need this vaccine to work in certain types of jobs.
- 4. Travel:** In some countries the risk of getting hepatitis B is higher. The vaccine will provide protection against hepatitis B if your student travels to these countries.

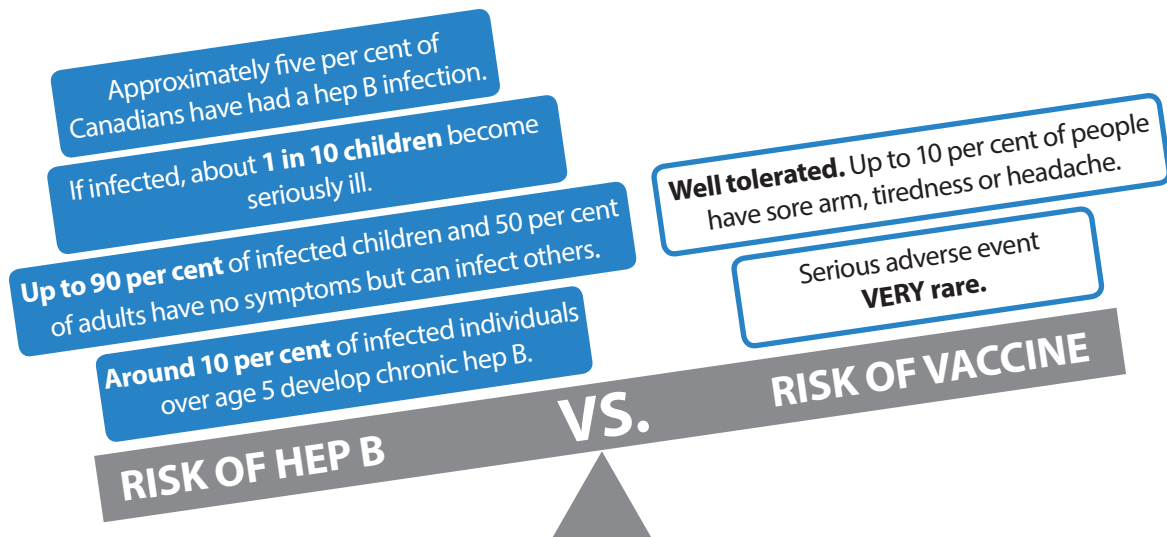
Who should not get this vaccine at school?

- Students with a history of a bad reaction after getting a vaccine.
- Students with an allergy to yeast protein.
- Students with a confirmed latex allergy.

These students should see their doctor for possible vaccination.

What if I decide not to get the vaccine?

The hepatitis B vaccine is not required by law to attend school. However, your student could be at risk of getting hepatitis B if you decide not to vaccinate.



How can I prepare my student for vaccination?



Talk to your student about the vaccine.



Complete and return the consent form.



Review helpful ways to deal with fear or anxiety (count to ten, look away from needle, focus on breathing).



Make sure your student eats on clinic day.



Make sure your student wears a short sleeve shirt on clinic day.

Visit our website for more information

halton.ca/immunize

Learn more about:

- Hepatitis B
- Vaccines
- Safety
- Side effects
- Ingredients
- Importance of vaccinations to protect your family

If you have further questions, ask your family doctor or dial 311.