

# Hepatitis A and B (HAVB) Vaccine

**Immunization protects you from disease. Get protected, get immunized.**

- **Vaccines make your immune system stronger. They build antibodies to help prevent diseases.**
- **Immunization is safe. It is much safer to get immunized than to get these diseases.**

## **What is the HAVB vaccine?**

The HAVB vaccine protects against the hepatitis A and hepatitis B viruses.

## **Who should have the HAVB vaccine?**

People with liver problems get this vaccine. You should also get this vaccine if you are at risk for hepatitis A and B because of:

- certain health problems such as some bleeding disorders
- your lifestyle

Talk to a public health nurse to find out if you can get HAVB vaccine for free. You may need a blood test to check if you are already protected.

You may also benefit from the vaccine if you travel to an area that has a high risk of hepatitis A and B. If you get the vaccine because of travel, it is not free.

If you cannot get the vaccine for free, check with your health insurance provider to see if your plan covers the cost.

## **How many doses do I need?**

Most people need 3 doses, which are given over 6 months.

## **Are there other vaccines that protect against hepatitis A and B?**

**Hepatitis B (HBV) vaccine** protects against hepatitis B virus. Grade 6 students get this vaccine in school. Most people born in 1981 or later who went to school in Alberta have had this vaccine.

**DTaP-IPV-Hib-HB vaccine** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, and hepatitis B. It is part of the routine vaccines that children get when they are young. Children born on March 1, 2018, or later in Alberta and children born outside of Alberta may have had this vaccine.

**Hepatitis A (HAV) vaccine** protects against hepatitis A virus. People who travel often get this vaccine.

If you have already had hepatitis A or B vaccines you do not need the HAVB vaccine. Check with a public health nurse or your healthcare provider if you are not sure if you have already had hepatitis A or hepatitis B vaccines.

## **How well does the vaccine work?**

After 3 doses given as recommended, protection is about:

- 90% to 97% for hepatitis A
- 95% to 100% for hepatitis B

## **Where can I get the HAVB vaccine?**

If you can get this vaccine for free, contact the public health office in your area.

If you want the vaccine and need to pay for it, contact a travel health clinic or talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

## **Are there side effects from the HAVB vaccine?**

There can be side effects from the HAVB vaccine, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, swelling, or feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling tired or getting upset easily
- headache
- fever
- not feeling hungry or not wanting to eat (poor appetite)
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea), vomiting, or loose stool (diarrhea)

It is important to stay at the clinic for 15 minutes after your vaccine. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

### How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dosage to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Children under the age of 18 years should **not** take aspirin because it can cause serious health problems.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

### Who should not have the HABV vaccine?

You may not be able to have the vaccine if you:

- have an allergy to parts of the vaccine
- had a severe or unusual side effect after this vaccine or one like it

Check with your doctor or a public health nurse before you get the vaccine.

You can still have the vaccine if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever. Always tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies or if you have had a side effect from a vaccine in the past.

### For More Information



Call Health Link at **811**



Go to **ImmunizeAlberta.ca**



Go to **MyHealth.Alberta.ca**

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## Facts about hepatitis A and B

### What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is an infection in the liver that is caused by the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms include poor appetite, nausea, feeling tired, fever, and yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). The symptoms can be serious and last for months.

One out of 4 adults who get this infection need to be admitted to a hospital. In rare cases, it can cause death.

You are at high risk for serious illness from hepatitis A if you:

- have other liver problems
- have a weak immune system
- are over the age of 60 years

Hepatitis A spreads through infected stool by getting onto hands or into food and water, and then into the mouth.

### What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is an infection in the liver that is caused by the hepatitis B virus. Symptoms include poor appetite, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). Some people do not have any symptoms.

One out of 10 adults infected with hepatitis B has an infection that does not go away (called a chronic infection).

- The younger you are, the higher your chance of having a chronic infection. For example, more than 9 out of 10 babies who are infected with hepatitis B will have a chronic infection.
- If you have a chronic hepatitis B infection, you have it forever. You can spread it to others, even if you do not look or feel sick.
- A chronic hepatitis B infection can lead to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer, and death.

Hepatitis B spreads through:

- childbirth (if the mother is infected)
- sharing needles, razors, nail clippers, or toothbrushes
- contact with equipment that is not cleaned properly (such as needles used for tattoos, body piercings, or acupuncture)
- sex
- human bites or open sores