

Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG)

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 hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG)?

HBIG is made from blood and contains antibodies to hepatitis B. It gives fast protection, but the protection is not long lasting.

When you get HBIG, you also start a hepatitis B vaccine series so your body can make its own antibodies for long-lasting protection.

What is hepatitis B?

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

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

- The younger you are, the higher the chance of having a chronic infection. 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.

Around the world each year, 500,000 to 1.2 million people die from hepatitis B-related disease.

Who is most at risk?

Anyone can get hepatitis B. Almost 1 out of 3 people who have it do not have any risk factors.

You have the highest risk if:

- the person who gave birth to you had hepatitis B when you were born
- you live with someone who has a chronic hepatitis B infection
- you are on dialysis
- you live in or travel to countries with high rates of hepatitis B infection
- you have a lifestyle that puts you at risk of the infection (such as having unprotected sex or sharing injection needles)

How does it spread?

Hepatitis B spreads by having contact with the blood and body fluids of a person who is infected. It can spread through:

- childbirth (if the person giving birth is infected)
- shared 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

Who should get HBIG?

HBIG may be offered when you are unprotected against hepatitis B and you may have had contact with the hepatitis B virus. For example, HBIG may be offered after a needle stick injury or to a newborn baby if the parent who gave birth has a hepatitis B infection.

How many doses do I need?

You need 1 dose of HBIG as soon as possible after contact with the virus. You will also need a dose of hepatitis B vaccine.

How well does HBIG work?

If you have contact with hepatitis B, HBIG and a dose of hepatitis B vaccine work very well to protect you. You need them within 7 days after contact with an infected person's blood or within 14 days after sexual contact.

For babies exposed at childbirth, HBIG and a dose of hepatitis B vaccine, given within 24 hours of birth, are 85% to 95% effective in preventing hepatitis B.

Is HBIG safe?

HBIG is one of the safest blood products available. Canadian Blood Services carefully screens donors and tests all blood. Blood is not used if the donor has risk factors or tests positive for an infectious disease. HBIG is treated with heat and chemicals to kill germs. The risk of getting an infection from HBIG is very small.

Where can I get HBIG?

Newborn babies who need HBIG and hepatitis B vaccine get them at the hospital.

If you think you have been in contact with the hepatitis B virus, call Health Link at 811. If you need HBIG and hepatitis B vaccine, you will get them at your local public health office or hospital.

It is important to finish all doses of hepatitis B vaccine and do any follow-up blood tests that your healthcare provider recommends.

Are there side effects from HBIG?

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

- feeling sore where you had the needle
- feeling unwell
- a headache
- a fever
- body aches or sore joints
- feeling sick to your stomach (nausea) or loose stool (diarrhea)

Hives and general swelling may occur.

It is important to stay at the hospital or public health office for 15 minutes after you have HBIG. 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 a fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dose to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- 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 HBIG.

Who should not get HBIG?

Talk to your healthcare provider before getting HBIG if you:

- have an allergy to any part of the immune globulin
- had a severe (serious) or unusual side effect after this immune globulin or one like it
- have low or no immunoglobulin A in your blood (IgA deficiency)

Check with your doctor or public health nurse before you get HBIG.

You can still get HBIG if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever.

What vaccines protect against hepatitis B?

For long-term protection, you need to be immunized with a vaccine that protects against hepatitis B.

- **DTaP-IPV-Hib-HB** protects against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, *Haemophilus influenzae* type B (Hib), and hepatitis B. Babies can get this vaccine.
- **HBV** vaccine protects against hepatitis B virus. Children in Grade 6 can get this vaccine. This vaccine is also available for anyone born in 1981 or later who did not get it in school. You may also get this vaccine if you are at risk for hepatitis B because of:
 - certain health problems (such as liver or kidney problems)
 - the type of work you do (such as some healthcare workers)
 - your lifestyle (such as having unprotected sex or sharing needles)
 - possible contact with the virus (such as having contact with someone else's blood)
- **Twinrix** vaccine protects against the hepatitis A and B viruses. People who travel often get this vaccine.

Can HBIG affect any vaccines I have had?

HBIG can interfere with live vaccines. You need to wait at least 3 months after having HBIG before you can have a live vaccine. Before you get a live vaccine, tell your healthcare provider if you had HBIG in the past 3 months.

If you had a live vaccine less than 14 days before having HBIG, ask a public health nurse if you need the live vaccine again.

I have a fear of needles. How can I prepare for my immunization?

Many adults and children are afraid of needles. You can do many things before, during, and after immunization to be more comfortable.



Scan the QR code, visit ahs.ca/vaccinecomfort, or call Health Link at 811 for information.

For more information about immunization



Call Health Link at **811**



Scan the QR code or go to ahs.ca/immunize