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

- Immune Globulins are needed for fast but short term protection.
- For long term protection, get immunized.

What is Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG)?
HBIG is made from blood and contains antibodies to hepatitis B. It gives fast protection but is not long lasting.
When HBIG is given, a hepatitis B vaccine series is started so that the body can make its own antibodies for long lasting protection.

Who should have HBIG?
HBIG may be offered when there is a high risk that an unprotected person may have had contact with the hepatitis B virus (e.g., baby born to mother with hepatitis B infection, needle stick injury).

How many doses of HBIG are needed?
People need 1 dose of HBIG as soon as possible after contact with the virus. The size of the dose depends on the person’s body weight.

How well does HBIG work?
HBIG and a dose of hepatitis B vaccine given within 24 hours after birth are 85% to 95% effective in preventing hepatitis B in babies born to mothers with hepatitis B infection.
HBIG and hepatitis B vaccine are very effective when given within 7 days after contact with an infected person’s blood or 14 days after sexual contact.

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

Where can I get HBIG?
HBIG is given at the hospital to babies born to mothers with hepatitis B infection.
If you think you have been in contact with the hepatitis B virus, call Health Link at 811. If HBIG and hepatitis B vaccine are needed, they will be given at your local public health office or hospital.

It is important to finish all doses of hepatitis B vaccine and any follow-up blood tests as recommended by your healthcare provider.

Are there side effects from HBIG?
Reactions to HBIG are usually mild and go away in a few days. They may include:
- discomfort where the needle was given
- feeling unwell, headache, body aches
- fever
- nausea, diarrhea
Hives and general swelling may occur.
It is important to stay for 15 minutes after the HBIG is given because people can have a rare but serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). If anaphylaxis happens, you will be given medicine to treat the symptoms.
Unusual reactions can happen. Call Health Link at 811 to report any unusual reactions.
How can I manage side effects?
- To help with discomfort and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area.
- If you need fever or pain medicine, check with your pharmacist or doctor. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 19 years old because it can cause serious health problems.
- Some people with health problems (e.g., weak immune system) must call their doctor whenever they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor—even if you think the fever was due to immunization.

Is there anyone who cannot have HBIG?
Talk to your healthcare provider before having HBIG if you:
- have an allergy to parts of the immune globulin—always tell your healthcare provider about allergies.
- had a severe or unusual reaction after this immune globulin (or a similar one)—always tell your healthcare provider if you have had reactions.
- have an IgA deficiency.

Quick Facts: Hepatitis B

What it is
- a virus that causes short-term (acute) symptoms including: poor appetite, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and yellow skin and eyes (jaundice)
- some people have no symptoms
- 1 out of 10 adults who are infected with hepatitis B will have long-term (chronic) infection
- the younger you are, the higher the chance of chronic infection (e.g., more than 9 out of 10 babies who are infected with hepatitis B will have chronic infection)
- people with chronic hepatitis B infection have it forever and can spread it to others, even if they do not look or feel sick
- chronic infection can lead to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer, and death
- 500,000 to 1.2 million people die from hepatitis B-related disease in the world each year

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. However, people who have the highest risk are those who:
- are born to mothers with hepatitis B infection
- live with someone who has a chronic hepatitis B infection
- are on dialysis
- live in or travel to countries with high rates of hepatitis B disease
- have lifestyle risks of infection (e.g., unprotected sex, sharing injection needles)

How it spreads
Spread through:
- childbirth (if mother is infected)
- sharing needles, razors, nail clippers, toothbrushes
- equipment that is not cleaned properly (e.g., tattoos, body piercings, acupuncture)
- sex
- human bites, open sores

You can have HBIG if you have a mild illness (e.g., cold), even if you have a fever.
HBIG can interfere with live vaccines. You need to wait at least 3 months after having HBIG before you can have a live vaccine. If you had a live vaccine less than 14 days before having HBIG, ask a public health nurse if the live vaccine needs to be repeated.

For More Information
- Call Health Link at 811
- Go to immunizealberta.ca
- Go to myhealth.alberta.ca