

Hepatitis B virus (HBV)

Vaccination information for Healthcare workers

What is HBV?

HBV is transported in blood to the liver, where it can infect liver cells. It has an incubation period range from 45 to 200 days. The virus can spread in the liver, ranging from acute hepatitis to chronic liver disease. Sometimes infection can be symptomless. Most patients with acute infection recover.

What are the risks to me as a Health care worker?

Carriers of HBV can pass infection to non-immune healthcare workers and other workers through accidental exposure to their blood and body fluids by, for instance, an injury with contaminated sharp instruments, or as a result of contamination of the mucous membranes (eyes, nose and mouth).

Workplace acquisition of HBV has been significantly reduced through the use of

- Effective vaccines
- Prevention
- Improved management of infections



Vaccination is recommended for all health care workers or other workers who are in direct contact with patient's blood, bodily fluids or tissues or are at risk of injury from contaminated sharp instruments, or directly from injury from their patients (bitten or scratched where skin is broken). In the event of a sharps injury please contact the Sharps hotline on **01273242282 option 1 for immediate clinical assessment and sharps management advice**. If you are calling outside of our normal business hours (9-5pm Monday to Friday). You will hear a message directing you to A+E and to leave a message so you can be contacted on the next working day.

What hepatitis B vaccination do we use?

HBvaxPRO® Summary of Product Characteristics. Merck Sharp & Dohme Limited. Or

Enerix B® Summary of Product Characteristics. GlaxoSmithKline UK.

How do I arrange my vaccination consultation if I have not already been vaccinated?

You will have provided your vaccination history on your pre- employment declaration form and be invited to arrange Hepatitis B vaccination if the course is incomplete. Please call **01273242282** if you need help to book an appointment.

The course of 3 vaccinations is usually completed over 6 months with vaccines given into the upper arm/deltoid muscle.

A blood test is required two to three months after vaccination to establish if you have enough antibodies to prevent hepatitis B infection and if you need a further 'booster' vaccination to reach the required antibody level.

Is the Hepatitis B vaccine right for me?

It is important to tell the OH nurse if any of the exclusion criteria points below apply to you. If you do not understand any of these questions, ask us to explain.

- **Hepatitis B Antigen +ve.** You should **not** have the vaccine if you had a Hepatitis B infection previously or have acute Hepatitis B. However you may have developed immunity from the infection and be protected (if there is any requirement for you to do "Exposure prone procedures" (EPP) where there is a risk that your blood could infect a patient please discuss with the OH nurse as there are separate processes for EPP workers)
- **Allergic reaction or known hypersensitivity to previous Hepatitis B vaccination, sodium chloride or sodium borate.**
- **Renal insufficiency or renal dialysis**
- **Post exposure prophylaxis**
- **Weakened immune system or receiving a therapy or have kidney dialysis that weakens the immune system** (e.g. receiving corticosteroids or other

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immunosuppressive treatment or suffering from a malignant condition such as lymphoma, leukaemia, Hodgkin's disease or other conditions of the reticuloendothelial system) , you may not be fully protected by vaccination and it is advised that this is discussed in confidence with the Occupational Health nurse as a different strength or number of injections of Hepatitis B vaccine may be needed and work adaptations may be considered.

- **Severe febrile illness or an infection with a high temperature.** Your vaccination can be delayed until you have recovered.
- **Bleeding disorders such as haemophilia** (a condition where you bruise or bleed easily) because you may have bleeding at the injection site.
- **Latex sensitivity.**

Nb. Reasonable adjustments to your work role to avoid exposure risks may be discussed with you if you are not able to be vaccinated.

Are there any risks if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

Although there is no evidence to suggest that the Hepatitis B vaccination causes harm to the fetus, we suggest you discuss the risks with both your GP and your OH nurse. Reasonable adjustments can be considered with your manager to reduce your exposure in your job role so your vaccination can be delayed until your pregnancy is complete.

The effects of being given the Hepatitis B vaccine during breast feeding have not been studied.

Are there any side effects?

The Hepatitis B vaccination is generally well tolerated and side effects resolve quickly

Common:

- Slightly painful, swollen, hard or itchy area at site of injection.

Rare: A **small** number of patients have reported the following:

- Fatigue, fever, flu-like symptoms.
- Breathing difficulties.
- Bruising, purple spotted rash, nose bleeds, and heavy periods.
- Dizziness, headache or tingling sensation.
- Painful joints or muscles.
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or stomach ache.
- Nettle rash or itching.
- Low blood pressure or fainting.
- Swollen glands.
- Disorders of the nervous system.
- Anaphylaxis.

Confidentiality

Your appointment with the OH advisor/nurse is confidential and we encourage you to ask any questions to ensure your consent for vaccination is fully informed.

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Please note Hepatitis B contamination is an identified work hazard for health care workers and information on whether you are protected may be shared with your manager to assist them with their risk assessment process to comply with Control of Substances Hazardous to Health regulations 2002 where necessary. We will not share details of your health conditions without your consent.

We look forward to meeting you at your appointment.

References:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/hepatitis-b-vaccine/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hepatitis-b-the-green-book-chapter-18>

<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.8404.pdf> (ENGERIX B vaccine)

<https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/files/pil.1684.pdf> (HBVAXPRO vaccine)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/index.htm>