

Hepatitis B Vaccine

What is hepatitis B?

- Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection.
- HBV can be transmitted from mothers with chronic hepatitis B (CHB) to their babies during delivery, through sexual contact or contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person.
- Some people fail to clear the virus and develop **CHB**. The younger a person is when infected with HBV, the higher the risk of developing chronic infection.
- About 15 - 40% of untreated people with CHB could develop **cirrhosis** and **liver cancer**.

Hepatitis B vaccine is effective in preventing HBV infection

- ✓ More than 95% of healthy people would produce protective antibody levels after completing the vaccination series.
- ✓ Provide **long-term protection**
- ✓ **Very safe** with minimal side effects (e.g. slight pain at injection site)

Hepatitis B vaccination

- A complete course of vaccination takes a total of **three doses**. The second dose is given 1 month after the first, and the third dose is given 5 months after the second.
- If there is an interruption between doses of hepatitis B vaccination, it is not necessary to restart the vaccination series. Arrangement for the subsequent doses should be made as soon as possible.
- Anyone, who has ever had allergic reaction after previous hepatitis B vaccination or is allergic to any component in hepatitis B vaccine (e.g. yeast), should not receive the vaccine.

Universal childhood hepatitis B vaccination programme

- Since 1988, the universal childhood hepatitis B vaccination programme has been implemented in Hong Kong, greatly reducing the risk of HBV infection.
- Regardless of the hepatitis B status of mothers, all newborn babies should receive the birth dose of hepatitis B vaccination in hospital. Afterwards, they should receive the second and third dose of the vaccination at the age of one month and six months respectively.
- Maternal and Child Health Centres of the Department of Health (DH) offer hepatitis B vaccination to children from birth to five years old.

- For primary school children who have not completed hepatitis B vaccination, School Immunisation Teams of DH provide mop-up vaccination services.

People at higher risk of infection should consider hepatitis B vaccination

- Family members (such as parents, siblings and offspring) and sexual partners of people with CHB
- People who inject drugs
- Men who have sex with men
- People with multiple sexual partners
- HIV-positive people
- People who receive blood or blood products on a regular basis
- People on dialysis
- Healthcare workers who may have occupational exposure to blood or other body fluids of patients

For adults, it is preferable to have blood tests for hepatitis B status before vaccination

- Vaccination is not required for people who already have protective antibody for HBV.
- If you are tested to be infected with HBV, vaccination will not be effective. You should consult a doctor for assessment and treatment of HBV infection.
- Only persons without HBV infection and protective antibody require hepatitis B vaccination.

For blood testing and vaccination for hepatitis B, please consult your family doctor.



www.hepatitis.gov.hk

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