

Hepatitis B vaccination

- **Vaccines to protect against hepatitis B are very safe and effective.**
- **Infants should be vaccinated against hepatitis B at birth.**
- **Adults at greater risk should be vaccinated against hepatitis B.**

There is a safe and effective vaccine that will protect you from getting hepatitis B and it is recommended all babies receive this vaccine. It has been around since 1982 and has been given to people in Australia who are at high risk of getting hepatitis B since 1986.¹

Who should be vaccinated?

All babies and adolescents should be vaccinated against hepatitis B, as well as some adults who are at greater risk of getting hepatitis B.

Children born after 1 May 2000 should have been given hepatitis B vaccine shortly after they were born. Infants normally get the first dose while they are in hospital and further doses at 2, 4 and 6 months of age.¹ If you are unsure if this happened, you should talk to your doctor as they can check if you are immune.

You can read the list of people who are recommended to get the hepatitis B on the next page.

How do you get vaccinated?

You can get the hepatitis B vaccine from your GP. You may also be able to get it from other medical services, a school immunisation program or your workplace, but you should check with the provider first.²

To get vaccinated for hepatitis B, most people need three injections over a six-month period. It is important that you get all of the injections

to make sure you are immune to hepatitis B. The number of injections and time between each dose will depend on your age and any other health conditions you may have.³

If you are at greater risk of getting hepatitis B, it is recommended that you have a blood test before getting vaccinated to check whether you already have hepatitis B or you are already immune.

Are there any side effects?

Most people don't get any side effects from the hepatitis B vaccine, but a small number of people get pain in the spot where they had the injection and/or a mild fever after the injections.³

You **cannot** get hepatitis B from the vaccine.

How much does the hepatitis B vaccination cost?

The cost of getting the hepatitis B vaccine varies around the country. Some people, including babies, people less than 20 years old, and people who live with someone who has hepatitis B can get the vaccine for free.^{4,5} This will depend on your level of risk.

You will need to pay for the cost of seeing the doctor to get your vaccine, unless the doctor bulk bills.

Hepatitis B vaccinations

List of people recommended to get the hepatitis B vaccine

The [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)³ (ATAGI 2018) recommends that the following groups of people get the hepatitis B vaccine:

- Infants, children and adolescents.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- People who are immunocompromised, including:
 - people living with HIV
 - dialysis patients and people with severely impaired kidney function
 - people about to receive an organ transplant
 - people who have received a stem cell transplant.
- People with other medical conditions, including:
 - people with chronic liver disease and/or hepatitis C
 - people who receive certain blood products
 - people with developmental disabilities who attend day-care facilities.
- People who are at risk because of their job, including:
 - people who work in any occupation that involves direct patient care, handling human tissue, blood or bodily fluids, or used needle and syringes
 - healthcare workers
 - police, members of the armed forces, emergencies services staff, and correctional facilities staff
 - funeral workers, embalmers
 - staff involved in care of people with development disabilities
 - workers who perform skin penetrating procedures, such as tattooists and body piercers.
- People travelling to countries with higher levels of hepatitis B.
- Other groups:
 - household or other close contacts of people living with hepatitis B
 - sexual contacts of people living with hepatitis B
 - men who have sex with men
 - migrants from countries with higher levels of hepatitis B
 - people who inject drugs
 - inmates in correctional facilities
 - sex industry workers.

1 NCIRS. (2018, July). Significant events in hepatitis B vaccination practice in Australia. Retrieved from NCIRS: <http://www.ncirs.org.au/sites/default/files/2018-11/Hepatitis-B-history-July-2018.pdf>

2 Department of Health. (2018, July 2). Where can I get immunised? Retrieved from Department of Health: <https://beta.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/getting-started/where-can-i-get-immunised>

3 Department of Health. (2018, November 1). Hepatitis B. Retrieved from Australian Immunisation Handbook: <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au/vaccine-preventable-diseases/hepatitis-b>

4 Department of Health. (2018, August 1). Hepatitis B immunisation service. Retrieved from Department of Health: <https://beta.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/immunisation-services/hepatitis-b-immunisation-service>

5 WHO Collaborating Centre for Viral Hepatitis. (2019). *Notification and immunisation links*. Retrieved from Hep B Help: <http://www.hepbhelp.org.au/index.asp?PageID=11>

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