

## ***Prevention and Vaccination***

How can I get hepatitis B?

Is hepatitis B transmitted casually?

Who is most likely to become infected with hepatitis B?

What should I do if I am in one of the "high risk groups"?

Is the hepatitis B vaccine safe?

Can I catch hepatitis B from the vaccine?

If I started the vaccine series but didn't complete my 2nd or 3rd dose on schedule, do I have to start the series over?

What else can I do to protect myself from hepatitis B?

### **How can I get hepatitis B?**

Hepatitis B is an infectious disease caused by a virus that is spread through blood. Listed below are the most common ways hepatitis B is passed to others:

- Direct contact with infected blood or infected bodily fluids
- Unprotected sex with an infected partner
- Shared or re-used needles (for example, sharing needles for illegal drugs or re-using needles that are not properly sterilized for medicine, acupuncture, tattoos, or ear/body piercing)
- From an infected mother to her newborn baby during pregnancy or delivery

### **Is hepatitis B transmitted casually?**

No, hepatitis B is not spread through casual contact. You cannot get hepatitis B from the air, hugging, touching, sneezing, coughing, toilet seats or doorknobs. You cannot get hepatitis B from eating or drinking with someone who is infected or from eating food prepared by someone who has hepatitis B.

### **Who is most likely to become infected with hepatitis B?**

- Sexually active adults and teenagers
- Men who have sex with men
- Infants born to infected mothers
- Healthcare workers and providers
- Emergency Personnel
- Recipients of blood transfusions before 1992
- Injection drug users, past and present



- People who get tattoos or body piercing
- Family or household members living in close contact with an infected person

### **What should I do if I am in one of the “high risk groups” for contracting hepatitis B?**

Anyone who is in a “high risk” group should receive the hepatitis B vaccine. It only takes 3 shots to protect you and your loved ones against hepatitis B for a lifetime! Adults can obtain the vaccine by asking their doctor or a local health clinic.

### **Is the hepatitis B vaccine safe?**

Yes, the hepatitis B vaccine is very safe and effective. In fact, it is the first “anti-cancer vaccine” because it can protect you from hepatitis B, which is the cause of 80% of all liver cancer in the world.

With more than one billion doses given throughout the world, medical and scientific studies have shown the hepatitis B vaccine to be one of the safest vaccines ever made.

### **Can I get hepatitis B from the vaccine?**

No, you cannot get hepatitis B from the vaccine. The vaccine is made from a synthetic yeast product in a laboratory. The most common side effects are redness and soreness in the arm where the shot is given.

### **What else can I do to protect myself from hepatitis B?**

Since hepatitis B is spread through infected blood and infected body fluids, there are several simple things that you can do to protect yourself from possible infection:

- Avoid touching blood or any bodily fluids directly
- Use condoms with sexual partners
- Avoid illegal drugs and prescription drug misuse, including injection of such drugs
- Avoid sharing sharp objects such as razors, toothbrushes, earrings, and nail clippers
- Make sure that sterile needles are used for medicine, acupuncture, tattoos, ear and body piercing
- Wear gloves and use a fresh solution of bleach and water to clean up blood spills
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after touching or cleaning up blood
- Most importantly, make sure you receive the hepatitis B vaccine!