



# Hepatitis B vaccine

## About hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a liver infection with illness ranging from mild illness that lasts a few weeks, to serious, lifelong illness. Hepatitis B vaccine can prevent this infection, and its related complications.

Acute hepatitis B infection is a short-term illness that can cause fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, jaundice (yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, clay-colored bowel movements), and pain in the muscles, joints, and stomach.

Chronic hepatitis B infection is a long-term illness that occurs when the hepatitis B virus remains in a person's body. Most people who go on to develop chronic hepatitis B do not have symptoms, but it is still very serious and can lead to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer, and death. Chronically infected people can spread hepatitis B virus to others, even if they do not look or feel sick.

Hepatitis B is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluid infected with the hepatitis B virus enters the body of a person who is not infected.

Hepatitis B vaccine is usually given as 2, 3, or 4 shots. Infants should get their first dose at birth, and will usually complete the series at 6-18 months of age.

Children and adolescents younger than 19 years of age who have not yet gotten the vaccine should be vaccinated.

## Important details

The CDC recommends that the following people **should** receive hepatitis B vaccine:

- all infants
- unvaccinated children <19 years
- adults aged 19-59 years
- adults aged 60 years and older with risk factors for hepatitis B

The following groups **may** receive hepatitis B vaccine:

- adults aged 60 years and older without risk factors for hepatitis B

Risk factors for hepatitis B:

- persons at risk of infection by sexual exposure
- persons at risk of infection by exposure to blood
- international travelers to countries of intermediate to high transmission levels
- persons with other infections such as hepatitis C, HIV, chronic liver disease, diabetes
- incarcerated persons



# What to expect after vaccination

It's normal to experience immune response after vaccination—this is how you know the vaccine is working. Side effects are usually mild and resolve on their own within a few days. Some normal immune responses after the hepatitis B vaccine include:

- pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site
- headache
- fever

People sometimes faint after medical procedures, including vaccination. Tell your provider if you feel dizzy or have vision changes or ringing in the ears. As with any medicine, there is a very small chance of the vaccine causing a severe allergic reaction, other serious injury, or death.

Tell the vaccination provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- has had an allergic reaction after a previous dose of hepatitis B vaccine
- Has any severe, life-threatening allergies

People with minor illnesses, such as a cold, may be vaccinated. People who are moderately to severely ill should usually wait until they recover before they get a hepatitis B vaccine. In some cases, the healthcare provider may decide to postpone hepatitis B vaccination until a future visit.

If they are not already, pregnant or breastfeeding people should be vaccinated against hepatitis B. Pregnancy and breastfeeding are not contraindications to hepatitis B vaccination. Available vaccines contain noninfectious particles, and should cause no risk of infection to the fetus.

# Hepatitis B vaccination statistics

## Only 30%

of adults ages 19 and older reported receiving at least 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine in 2018

## 820,000

estimated deaths every year due to chronic hepatitis B infection globally

## 296 million

people estimated by the WHO living with chronic hepatitis B infection in 2019, with 1.9 million new infections each year.

For more vaccine information, go to [immunize.utah.gov](https://immunize.utah.gov) or scan the QR code!

