

Health & Immunisation Management Services

Experienced, cost effective vaccination and health services



Information Hepatitis B

Those groups who are recommended to receive Hepatitis B vaccines

- Sexual contacts (susceptible several partners of patients with acute Hepatitis B);
- Haemodialysis patients, HIV-positive individuals and other immune compromised adults;
- Injecting drug users;
- Individuals with chronic liver disease/or Hepatitis C;
- Residents and staff of facilities for persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Individuals adopting children from overseas;
- Inmates and staff of long-term correctional facilities;
- Health Care workers, Dentists; Embalmers, Tattooists and Body Piercers.

Outlined below are several other situations in which a person may be at risk and wish to consider being immunised against Hepatitis B.

Occupational risk includes:

- Police, Members of Armed Forces and Emergency Services staff;
- Staff of Day -Care Centres and Child-Care Centres.

Hepatitis B is only one of several different types of viral Hepatitis which occur worldwide. The incubation period is generally long, from 45-160 days (average 60-90 days) and the infection can produce a mild or severe illness. In this country the disease is most commonly reported in young, male adults who may be homosexuals and/or IV drug users.

Solid immunity usually follows acute infection in adults. However, in perhaps 5% of adult cases (and a higher percentage of child cases), a chronic carrier state may persist for years, but most likely in the former group. Children generally acquire the infection from their mother at birth or soon after birth. A chronic carrier state is common amongst Australian Aborigines, South East Asians and some Mediterranean races.

The most common modes of transmission are from infected blood entering wounds, cuts or lacerations in mucous membranes; sexual intercourse; and from contaminated needles, syringes and other IV equipment.

A course of three doses of Hepatitis B vaccine is required: the first dose; a second dose one month later; and the third dose six months following the first dose. This provides up to 97% sero-conversion (protection) in young healthy individuals. Your family doctor can perform a test to confirm that your immunisation has been effective.

Accelerated Schedule:

There is a schedule for those who require a more rapid protection (eg. traveller departing to endemic regions). Two (2) products can be used Hepatitis B (Engerix) and Twinrix (Hepatitis B and Hepatitis A combined) can be given at 0, 7, 21 days with a booster at 12 months.

Common reactions:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches

Should you experience any unexpected side effects you can seek medical advice from?

1. Your GP
2. Your Immunisation Provider
The Immunisation Section (SA Health) 0900-1630 Monday –Friday
Telephone: 1300 232 272
1. If it is after hours, please call Health Direct 1800 022 222
2. Or your local Emergency Department