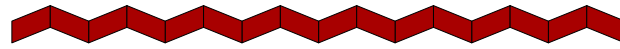




# HEPATITIS B



## Safety & Security Fact Sheet

### ✓ **WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?**

Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV), which is present in the blood and body fluids of an infected individual. The virus is referred to as a bloodborne pathogen. The virus can be transmitted from mother to baby at birth as well as through unprotected sexual intercourse and unsterilized needles. HBV infection can cause acute illness that leads to loss of appetite, tiredness, pain in muscles, joints, or stomach, diarrhea or vomiting, and yellow skin or eyes (jaundice). HBV can also cause chronic infection, especially in infants and children, which leads to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer, and death. Fortunately, there is an effective vaccine that can prevent infection.

### ✓ **HOW COULD HEPATITIS B BE TRANSMITTED IN A SCHOOL SETTING?**

Transmission could occur in the school setting as a result of exposure to infected blood. However, exposure is not simple contact with blood. Exposure occurs when the blood of an infected individual enters the bloodstream of another through a cut or sore or when splashed into the eyes, mouth, or nose. Exposure does not occur through contact with other body fluids such as mucus, vomitus, or feces unless blood is present. The blood from any individual should be considered infectious.

### ✓ **CAN HEPATITIS B BE TRANSMITTED BY A HUMAN BITE?**

Some victims of hepatitis B infections may harbor the virus in their saliva. In a few of these cases, there may be a sufficient amount of virus in the saliva to represent a transmissible dose. If such an infected individual were to bite someone and saliva were to be introduced into the victim's bloodstream through the wound, transmission could possibly occur. The risk of transmission by this route is considered extremely small. There have been no documented reports of this ever occurring. Nevertheless, a bite that breaks the skin and causes bleeding is considered an exposure. Note that the biter is also considered to have been exposed if he or she gets the victim's blood in his or her mouth.

### ✓ **WHAT IS THE HEPATITIS B VACCINATION?**

The hepatitis B vaccination is a noninfectious vaccine given in three injections in the upper arm. It is prepared from recombinant yeast cultures rather than from human blood or plasma. The vaccine does not contain any live components. The second injection should be given one month after the first, and the third injection should be given six months after the initial dose. More than 90 percent of those vaccinated will develop immunity to the hepatitis B virus. To ensure immunity, it is important for individuals to receive all three injections. Persons who respond to hepatitis B vaccine are protected against acute hepatitis B as well as the chronic consequences of HBV infection, including cirrhosis, and liver cancer.





✓ **IS THE HEPATITIS B VACCINE SAFE?**

The hepatitis B vaccine has been shown to be very safe when given to infants, children, or adults. More than 20 million people have received the hepatitis B vaccine in the United States. There is no risk of HBV infection from the vaccine. The most common side effect observed after vaccination is soreness at the injection site.

✓ **IS THERE AN ASSOCIATION BETWEEN HEPATITIS B VACCINE AND SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS?**

Serious side effects reported after receiving hepatitis B vaccine are rare. There is no confirmed scientific evidence that hepatitis B vaccine causes chronic illness such as multiple sclerosis or autoimmune disorders. Surveillance of adverse events in the United States after the hepatitis B vaccination have shown no association between hepatitis B vaccine and the occurrence of serious adverse events including Guillain-Barre syndrome, transverse myelitis, optic neuritis, and seizures. A low rate (1 in 600,000 doses) of anaphylaxis (hives, difficulty breathing, shock) has been observed in vaccine recipients. Any presumed risk of adverse events associated with the hepatitis B vaccination must be balanced with the expected 4,000 to 5,000 HBV-related liver disease deaths that would occur without immunization.

✓ **WHAT ARE THE CONTRAINDICATIONS OF THE HEPATITIS B VACCINATION?**

Hypersensitivity to the components of the vaccine including yeast and therosol, a preservative, is the only contraindication of the hepatitis B vaccination.

✓ **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THE HEPATITIS B VACCINATION AT NO COST?**

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) employees who are identified as being at increased risk of exposure because of the nature of their job assignments are eligible to receive, with written authorization from the Office of Safety and Security (OSS), vaccination against hepatitis B at no cost. The employees considered to be at greater risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens are those who routinely administer first-aid, such as athletic trainers and substitutes for clinic room aides, or who care for students who are prone to bite. Additionally, any FCPS employee who is exposed to blood is eligible to receive postexposure medical evaluation and follow-up treatment as described in FCPS Regulation 7355 (most recent version). The exposed employee should seek medical treatment from a designated health care provider within 24-hours of the exposure incident.

✓ **WHERE IS THE HEPATITIS B VACCINATION AVAILABLE?**

The hepatitis B vaccination is available through the Fairfax County Health Department at adult walk-in clinics. The Fairfax County Health Department requires a written statement of authorization signed by the director of OSS before any work-related immunizations will be administered. A separate authorization form is required for each inoculation. If an employee chooses instead to go to his or her own physician to be vaccinated, the employee will not receive reimbursement from FCPS.

visit or call:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at 1-888-4HEP-CDC (1-888-443-7232),

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/b/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/b/index.htm), or the

Fairfax County Health Department at 703-246-2411.

If you need assistance, call the safety section at 571-423-2010.