

Good News!
HEPATITIS B
IS PREVENTABLE

Parents try hard to protect their children throughout their lives. Vaccines are one of the best ways to protect your child.

Your baby should receive the hepatitis B vaccine at the following ages:

- At birth
- 1-2 months
- 6-18 months

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions,
please call your healthcare provider or the
Iowa Department of Public Health at
1-800-831-6293

For information about the
Iowa Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program:
<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/hepatitis.asp>
or call 1-800-831-6293 ext. 7

For additional information
on vaccines and diseases please visit:
www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/immunization.asp
www.immunize.org • www.cdc.gov/nip
www.vaccine.chop.edu • www.aap.org

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Hepatitis B Immunization



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WHAT IS HEPATITIS B?

Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV attacks the liver and can lead to premature death from liver failure and liver cancer. Hepatitis B can be transmitted from an infected mother to her child at birth. Most newborns who become infected with HBV do not get sick at first, but they have a 90% chance of developing lifelong infection.

There is good news! Hepatitis B is preventable with a very safe and effective vaccine. You can protect your baby by making sure he or she is vaccinated beginning at birth.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET HEPATITIS B?

HBV is found in blood and body fluids of people who have hepatitis B infection. Hepatitis B can be transmitted from mother to child through blood and body fluids at birth. There are many parts of the world where HBV is very common and is easily transmitted from mother to child at birth: China, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, Africa, the Amazon Basin (Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela) and parts of the Middle East. HBV can also be transmitted later through sharing toothbrushes, razors, or needles for tattoos and piercing; or through unprotected sex. Contact with even small amounts of infected blood can cause infection. **Hepatitis B virus is NOT spread by breastfeeding, coughing, sneezing, hugging or kissing.**

WHAT IS THE "BIRTH DOSE" AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The "birth dose" is the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine given to babies right after birth. Giving your baby the birth dose helps protect them from HBV right from the start. We often think of the birth dose as a safety net for babies; giving them a head start on protection from hepatitis B. In the newborn, hepatitis B infection can lead to chronic infection of the liver, resulting in a lifelong risk of liver damage and liver cancer.

WHEN SHOULD MY BABY GET VACCINATED?

Three simple doses of the hepatitis B vaccine will protect your baby against HBV.

- **At birth – the vaccine is safe even for premature babies**
- **1-2 months**
- **6-18 months**

Your child's healthcare provider may use a combination vaccine (containing several vaccines in one injection) to limit the number of needle sticks your child will receive at each visit. When combination vaccines are used, your child may get four doses of HBV vaccine; at birth and at the 2, 4 and 6 month visits. Receiving four doses of HBV vaccine is safe for your child.

BABIES BORN TO HBV POSITIVE MOMS NEED EXTRA CARE TO PREVENT INFECTION:

- **At birth:** Birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine AND a dose of hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) within 12 hours of birth.
- **1-2 months:** 2nd dose of HBV vaccine
- **6 months:** 3rd dose of HBV vaccine
- **9-12 months:** Have your child's healthcare provider conduct blood tests to confirm that your child is protected.