

# FACT SHEET

## Hepatitis B Vaccine for Students

Grade 7 students are offered this free vaccine that is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

### What is hepatitis B and how do you get it?

- Hepatitis B is a virus that may cause long-term liver damage and is the leading cause of liver cancer.
- Over 100 cases of hepatitis B are reported each year in Ontario<sup>1</sup>.
- Hepatitis B is found in the blood or other body fluids of an infected person. It can be spread through sexual contact, contaminated body/ear piercing and tattooing equipment, razors, scissors, nail clippers, or toothbrushes from people with hepatitis B. Pregnant mothers infected with hepatitis B can also pass the virus to the baby at birth.

### What are the symptoms of hepatitis B and can it be prevented?

- Symptoms of hepatitis B can include fatigue, fever, loss of appetite, and jaundice (yellow skin and eyes).
- Hepatitis B can be prevented through immunization.

### Why should my child receive the hepatitis B vaccine series?

- An up-to-date hepatitis B series is required for students entering health-related programs at colleges and universities.
- For protection during mission trips to countries where medical equipment is not sterilized up to Canadian standards.
- To provide protection if exposed to blood and other body fluids when providing first aid treatment.

### What to expect after receiving the hepatitis B immunization?

- The hepatitis B vaccine is very safe and has been used in Canada for more than 35 years<sup>2</sup>.
- It is common to have some redness, swelling, or pain at the site where the needle was given. Some students may develop a headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and on rare occasions, have nausea and/or vomiting. It is very rare for a severe reaction to occur. Difficulty with breathing, swelling of the

mouth or face, hives, a rash or seizure/convulsions require immediate medical care. Concerns about your child's symptoms should be reported to your physician/nurse practitioner and the Health Unit.

### What's in the hepatitis B vaccine?

Contents	Where else are they found?
Pieces of hepatitis B virus	Hepatitis B disease
Aluminum	Vegetables, cereal, deodorant
Sodium chloride	Human body, table salt
Sodium borate	Water softener, soap, soil
Yeast	Human body, bread, bagels
Formaldehyde	Human body, fruits, fish

### Who should not receive the vaccine?

- Those who are fevered the day of the clinic should wait until feeling better.
- Anyone with a weakened immune system due to illness, medication, or therapy should delay receiving the vaccine.
- Anyone with an allergy to any part of the vaccine.
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, consult your healthcare provider.

### How can I prepare my child?



Talk to your child about the vaccine.



Review helpful ways to deal with fear or anxiety (count to ten, look away from needle, focus on breathing)



Make sure your child eats on clinic day.



Make sure your child wears a short sleeve shirt on clinic day.

#### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/immune/hepb.aspx#:~:text=There%20are%20over%20100%20cases,and%20not%20have%20any%20symptoms>

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Public health agency. <https://www.cpha.ca/immunization-timeline>