

HEPATITIS B VACCINATION

Hepatitis B Vaccination Infosheet

- Adult hepatitis B vaccination usually involves three separate injections administered within six months (at 0, 1 and 6 months).
- Infant (new born) hepatitis B vaccination usually involves a birth dose of infant formulation hepatitis B vaccine. Following this birth dose, 3 doses of a hepatitis B containing vaccine are administered at 2, 4 and 6 months of age.
- Routine antenatal screening of pregnant women for exposure to the hepatitis B virus is recommended to enable appropriate management to prevent newborn infants developing HBV infection.
- Infants born to mothers with chronic hepatitis B (CHB) are usually given two vaccines (HBIG and a dose of hepatitis B vaccine on the day of birth) concurrently but in separate thighs to help generate rapid immunity in the newborn. Following these birth doses, 3 doses of a hepatitis-B-containing vaccine are administered at 2, 4 and 6 months of age.
- Persons identified as **non-responders** to the primary hepatitis B vaccination (following completion of the 3 vaccines, a blood test identifies that current anti-HBs levels are still below 10 mIU/mL) have a number of potential options that can be offered to support development of immunity.

Further information can be found at this [link](#), or talk further with your doctor or sexual health nurse to find out more.

If you are unsure whether you have received the hepatitis B vaccination course in the past, a blood test may be required in order to investigate whether you need the vaccine or have the antibody or living with chronic viral hepatitis B.

Most adults clear the virus and build an immunity against the virus naturally.

Only those susceptible to the virus shall get the vaccine.

With this, most people will develop complete protection against the hepatitis B virus.

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Vaccinations can be accessed through a doctor or sexual health clinic.

The vaccination course may be FREE for an individual if they meet the current Victorian Government eligibility criteria for FREE vaccines and/or National Immunisation Program (NIP) criteria.

The NIP has expanded to provide free catch-up vaccines for all individuals aged less than 20 years, and refugees and humanitarian entrants aged 20 years and over from 1 July 2017.

The Victorian Government has recently expanded the eligibility criteria to include all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – hepatitis B non-immune, no restrictions, and people no longer in a custodial setting who commenced but did not complete a free vaccine course while in custody.

If an individual has experienced socio-economic disadvantage that compromised their equitable access to the vaccine during their period of eligibility, they may also be eligible for FREE vaccination catch-up (including Hepatitis B).

Talk to your doctor or sexual health nurse to find out more. You can also call the Hepatitis Infoline **1800 703 003** to find out more or click on the following links.

- [Victorian Government Eligibility Criteria July 2017](#)
- [National Immunisation Program: Free catch-up vaccines for all individuals aged 10 to 19 years \(ongoing\)](#)
- [Australian Immunisation Handbook: Hepatitis B](#)

This infosheet is intended as a general guide only. It is not intended to replace expert or medical advice.

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Eligibility criteria for free vaccine

1 July 2017

Infants, children, adolescents, adults and special risk groups are eligible to receive some vaccines for free under the National Immunisation Program (NIP). The Victorian Government also funds the provision of some vaccines that are not included on the NIP. See the Immunisation schedule Victoria for the vaccine program.

Some groups of people can receive free routine and catch-up vaccines following a clinical assessment made by an immunisation provider based on the individual risk for the person.

Free routine and catch-up vaccines are available for the following people where clinically indicated. This includes non-Medicare card holders:

- All people under 20 years of age. From 1 July 2017 the catch-up schedule will need to commence on or before the child's 20th birthday and may be completed beyond this date, as required.
- All refugees and humanitarian entrants including asylum seekers
- People at risk of hepatitis B infection as follows:
 - All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – hepatitis B non-immune, no restrictions.
 - Household contacts and sexual partners of people living with hepatitis B
 - People who inject drugs or are on opioid substitution therapy
 - People living with Hepatitis C
 - Men who have sex with men
 - People living with HIV
 - People no longer in a custodial setting who commenced but did not complete a free vaccine course while in custody
- Australian volunteer wildlife handlers working in a volunteer service in Victoria for the initial course of pre exposure rabies vaccine
- Post exposure treatment for rabies or Australian Bat Lyssavirus
- Vulnerable citizens - A person who has experienced socioeconomic disadvantage that compromised their equitable access to the vaccine during their period of eligibility. Vulnerable citizens are vaccinated based on an individual assessment by an immunisation provider.

All other people who are eligible to hold a Medicare card:

- All other people from 20 years of age who do not meet the above criteria, must be eligible to hold a Medicare card to receive age appropriate vaccines for free under the National Immunisation Program and the Victorian funded vaccine program.

Catch-up vaccines should be administered according to age-appropriate guidelines in the current edition of The Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Even though the vaccine may be free, the clinical administration of the vaccine/s may incur a fee by the vaccination provider .

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Hepatitis B Vaccine Shortage in Private Market (*revised in August 2017*)

Hepatitis Victoria is aware there is currently a global shortage of **adult** formulation hepatitis B vaccine (e.g. Engerix-B®) in the private market. This shortage is expected to continue into 2018. In details:

- **ENGERIX-B** hepatitis B surface antigen recombinant (yeast) 20 microgram/1mL injection syringe. Expected supply: **30 Jan 2018**
 - Manufacturer: GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)
- **H-B-VAX II** hepatitis B vaccine recombinant 10 microgram/1mL injection pre-filled syringe (thiomersal free). Expected supply: **31 Jul 2018**
 - Manufacturer: Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD)
- **H-B-VAX II** hepatitis B vaccine recombinant preservative-free paediatric 5 microgram/0.5mL injection pre-filled syringe. Expected supply: **31 Jul 2018**
 - Manufacturer: MSD

In addition, **Twinrix [Combined Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccine] adult vaccine** (Manufacturer: GSK) is experiencing a supply constraint in Australia due to a precautionary disruption in the manufacturing process.

The Australian Government Department of Health has advised it is currently working closely with hepatitis B vaccine suppliers (currently GSK) as well as state and territory governments to better understand the extent and impact of the shortage and to consider options to address it. For your reference, here is the link to the official statement (released on 3 August 2017) on the GSK Australia website.

<http://au.gsk.com/en-au/media/press-releases/2017/engerix-b-hepatitis-b-vaccine-availability/>

For customer enquiries please call GSK Medical Information on 1800 033 109.

In addition, there are no shortages of hepatitis B vaccine in the government programs. In Victoria, free hepatitis B vaccine is provided for people who are at increased risk including:

- household contacts and sexual partners of people living with hepatitis B
- people who inject drugs or are on opioid substitution therapy
- people living with hepatitis C
- men who have sex with men
- people living with HIV
- prisoners and people on remand who do not have hepatitis B or immunity against hepatitis B
- people no longer in a custodial setting who commenced, but did not complete, a free vaccine course while in custody
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Further queries can be directed to Hepatitis Infoline on 1800 703 003 (9.00am – 5.00pm, Monday – Friday)

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