

# Hepatitis B and the Vaccine

## What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B (HB) is a virus that spreads easily through blood and body fluids. The virus can stay alive on things like razors or toothbrushes for up to one week. It can cause damage, swelling or cancer of the liver. Each year in Ontario HB leads to about:

- 350 deaths
- 300 cancers
- 90 cases of swollen or damaged liver

What is in the Hepatitis B Vaccine ?*	Where else are these ingredients found?
Parts of Hepatitis B virus	Hepatitis B virus
Aluminum	Vegetables, cereal, deodorant
Sodium chloride	Human body, salt
Sodium borate	Water, soil
Yeast	Human body, bread, bagels
Formaldehyde	Human body, fruits, fish

\* Recombivax<sup>®</sup> vaccine ingredients.

## What is the benefit of get the Hepatitis B vaccine?

- If all doses are received, the vaccine protects most people (>95%) against hepatitis B virus for at least 15 years or more.

## Is the Hepatitis B vaccine safe?

- Yes!
- Hepatitis B vaccine has been used in Ottawa Public Health school immunization clinics for over 25 years.
- You cannot get the hepatitis virus from the vaccine.

## What are the side effects from the Hepatitis B vaccine?

Most Common	Less Common	Very Rare and Serious
Redness, pain and/or swelling at the site, especially during the first 24 hours	Tiredness, headache and/or slight fever	Serious allergic reaction causing; trouble breathing, swelling of the face or mouth, hives
<b>Treatment:</b> Apply ice to the area where you got the vaccine and/or take acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol <sup>®</sup> )		Clinic nurses are trained to treat severe reactions

## How can I protect myself from the Hepatitis B virus?

- Get the vaccine.
- Be abstinent
- If you are considering having sex, there are ways to protect yourself against hepatitis B, talk to your parents, health care provider or for more information go to [ParentinginOttawa.ca/immunization](http://ParentinginOttawa.ca/immunization).
- Make sure sterile tools are used for tattooing or body piercing.
- Do not share razors, toothbrushes or other personal care items.

## Compare the Risks – Hepatitis B Virus or Hepatitis B Vaccine?

Hepatitis B Virus Risk	Hepatitis B Vaccine Risk
1 in 10 infected children get acute hepatitis	Sore arm - 3 in 10 people
1-2 out of 100 with acute Hepatitis B die	Fever - 6 in 100 people
9 in 10 infected children have no symptoms but can infect others (carriers) 1 in 10 infected people over age 5 get <b>chronic Hepatitis B</b> . Up to 1 in 4 people with chronic Hepatitis B die	Serious reactions very rare

## How can I prepare for the vaccine?

- Talk to your parent or guardian about the vaccine.
- Learn ways to deal with your worry about the vaccination (focus on breathing, look away from needle, count to ten, etc.).
- Wear a short sleeve shirt.
- Eat breakfast and have an extra juice or small snack to prevent fainting (common with growing teens).

### Did you have a Twinrix<sup>®</sup> vaccine?

Twinrix<sup>®</sup> is a vaccine that protects against both Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. In Ontario Twinrix is not publicly funded. To be fully protected you need 2 or 3 doses of Twinrix<sup>®</sup>. If you are unsure if you are fully protected against Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B call 613-580-6744.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/immune/hepb.aspx>