



Patient & Family Guide

2023

# Hepatitis B Vaccine and Kidney Disease

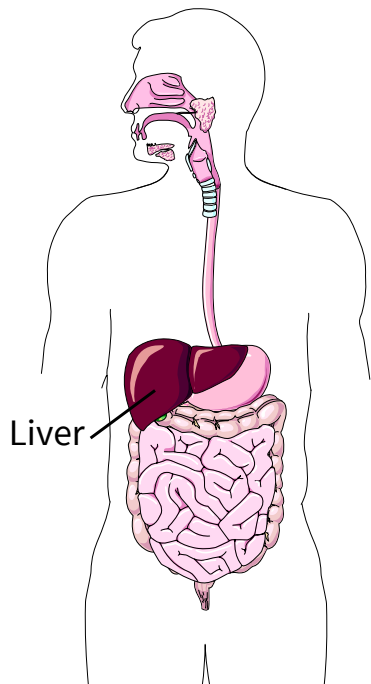


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# Hepatitis B Vaccine and Kidney Disease

## What is Hepatitis B?

- The liver is an organ in your body that:
  - › Helps to break down and digest the food you eat
  - › Cleans your blood
  - › Fights infection
- Hepatitis B is a virus that attacks the liver. “Hepatitis” means swelling of the liver.
- Hepatitis B can cause serious liver problems, including:
  - › Liver damage
  - › Liver failure
  - › Liver cancer
- Some people who have this virus get very sick. They may have a fever (temperature above 38° C/100.4° F), jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), vomiting (throwing up), and belly pain.
- About half of the people who have this virus never feel sick. They may spread the disease without knowing it.



## How is Hepatitis B spread?

- Hepatitis B spreads when blood or other body fluids from a person who has the virus enter the body of someone who does not have the virus. It can be spread by touching surfaces or equipment that are contaminated (have the virus on them).
- People with kidney disease who may need dialysis or a kidney transplant in the future, have a higher chance of getting Hepatitis B.
- **The best way to prevent Hepatitis B is to get vaccinated.**

## What is the Hepatitis B vaccine?

- The Hepatitis B vaccine protects you from the virus. It has been safely used in Canada since 1982.
- The vaccine does not have any blood or living virus in the ingredients.
- The vaccine is given as a series of 3 or 4 shots over 6 months. **You must have ALL of the shots in the series to be protected long-term.**
- One month after your final shot, you will be asked to have a blood test. This checks if you are protected from the Hepatitis B virus. If you are not protected, you will need to have a second series of shots.
- Every year, you will have a blood test to make sure you are still protected from the virus.

## What are the possible side effects of the Hepatitis B vaccine?

Possible side effects include:

- › Burning and/or stinging at the injection site (where the needle went into your body) at the

time of injection. This is normal. It will go away after a short time.

- › Pain, swelling, and redness at the injection site. This is normal. It will go away after a short time.
- › Fever. This can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®), as needed. If you have a fever that lasts longer than 24 hours (1 day), call your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner).

## Who should not get the Hepatitis B vaccine?

You should not get the vaccine if you:

- › have a fever. You can still get the shot if you have a cold.
- › have had a life-threatening reaction to a dose of Hepatitis B vaccine or any part of the vaccine in the past.

### Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.