

Important Information about **Hepatitis A** and **Hepatitis B Diseases** and Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B (HAHB) Vaccine

PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY

What is Hepatitis A disease?

- Hepatitis A is an infection of the liver caused by the Hepatitis A virus.
- It is spread when germs from the feces (poop) of an infected person get into the mouth of another person. It can also be spread when someone eats or drinks contaminated food or water.
- It can cause fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and yellow skin and eyes (jaundice).
- Infection without symptoms is very common in infants and young children.
- The illness may last several weeks. Most people recover completely.

What is Hepatitis B disease?

- Hepatitis B is a virus that attacks the liver.
- It can cause permanent liver damage and scarring. In some cases, it can be life-threatening.
- It is the number one cause of liver cancer in the world.
- Some people who get Hepatitis B can get very sick, with fever, yellow skin and eyes (jaundice), vomiting, and pain in the abdomen.
- About half the people who are infected with Hepatitis B never feel sick, and they can spread the disease without knowing it.

- Hepatitis B is caused by contact with infected blood or body fluids. This can happen in any of the following ways:
 - » through a break in the skin such as a cut, bleeding gums, needle stick, or tattoo
 - » by sharing needles, toothbrushes, or razors
 - » during unprotected sexual contact
 - » during birth, from a pregnant parent who has the virus
- It is preventable through immunization.

What is the Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B (HAHB) vaccine?

- The HAHB vaccine protects against Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B virus infection in adults, adolescents, children and infants.
- This vaccine contains pieces of the Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B viruses which are not active and can't make you sick. This vaccine will help your immune system fight these viruses if you are exposed to them in the future.

Who should receive the Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B (HAHB) vaccine?

- HAHB vaccine is not part of the Nova Scotia Routine Immunization Schedules for Children, Youth & Adults. People who are at high risk of getting Hepatitis A or Hepatitis B should consider getting the HAHB vaccine.

CAUTION

Who should NOT receive the Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B (HAHB) vaccine?

- People who have had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose or any component of the HAHB vaccine, or the individual Hepatitis A or Hepatitis B vaccines.
- People who are sick or have a fever (temperature of 38.5°C/101.3°F or greater).

Please read other side.

What to Expect Following Immunization with Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B (HAHB) Vaccine

VACCINE INFORMATION

People should stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization to monitor possible reaction. As with any vaccine there is a slight possibility that a more serious reaction could occur.

What are the possible side effects of the Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B (HAHB) vaccine?

- As with any other vaccine, the most common side effects are soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site.
- Less common side effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, loss of appetite, flu-like symptoms, or generally feeling unwell.

Over-the-counter pain relievers such as ibuprofen (e.g., Advil) and acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) can be used to manage symptoms following vaccination, including fever. Some people should not take these medications. Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist if you have questions, or are unsure if you should take these.

Questions?

If you have any questions about Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B diseases or the Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B (HAHB) vaccine, please call your local Public Health office (see list of offices here: www.nshealth.ca/public-health-offices) or your health care provider.

For more information on immunization, please visit the websites of

- Nova Scotia Health, Public Health at <https://www.nshealth.ca/public-health/immunizations>
- Immunize Canada at immunize.ca
- the Public Health Agency of Canada at phac-aspc.gc.ca
- 811 at <https://811.novascotia.ca/>