



Patient & Family Guide

2026

Hepatitis B Vaccine and Kidney Disease

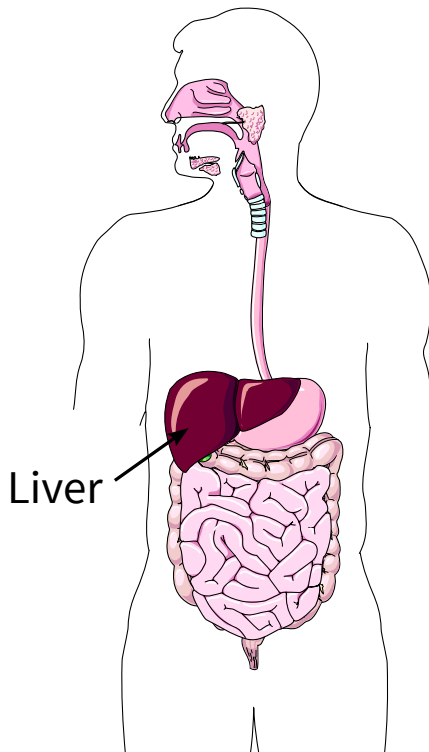


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Hepatitis B Vaccine and Kidney Disease

What is hepatitis B?

- The liver is an organ in your body that:
 - › Helps to digest (break down) 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 with hepatitis B get very sick. They may have:
 - › Fever (temperature above 38 °C or 100.4 °F)
 - › Jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)
 - › Vomiting (throwing up)
 - › Stomach pain
- About half of people with hepatitis B never feel sick. This means 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).
- You have a higher chance of getting hepatitis B if you have kidney disease and may need dialysis or a kidney transplant in the future.
- **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 it.
- The vaccine is given as a series of 3 or 4 shots over 6 months. **You must get all of the shots in the series to be protected long-term.**
- One (1) month (30 days) after your last shot, we will ask you to have a blood test. This is to check if you are protected from the hepatitis B virus. If you are not protected, you will need to have a 2nd 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 will go away after a short time.
- Pain, swelling, and redness at the injection site. This will go away after a short time.
- Fever. This can be treated with acetaminophen (Tylenol®), as needed. Follow the directions on the package.
 - › 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 vaccine if you have a cold
 - › Have had a life-threatening reaction to a hepatitis B vaccine, or any part of the vaccine, in the past

If you have any questions, talk to a member of your health care team, like your pharmacist, nurse practitioner, nurse, or doctor.

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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