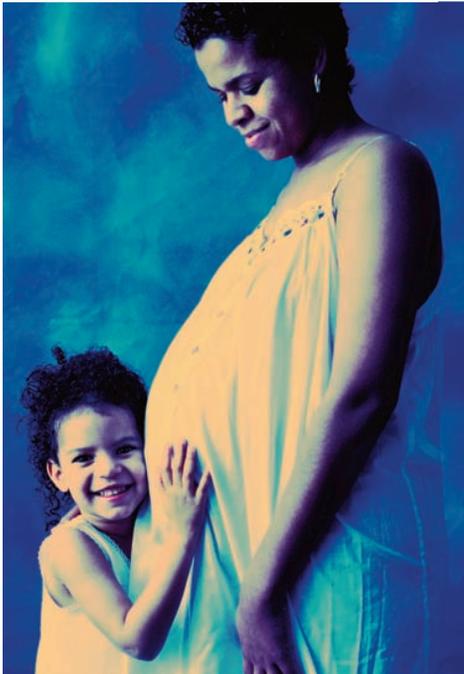




Is the hepatitis B vaccine safe?

Hepatitis B vaccine is very safe. The most common side effect is soreness at the injection site or slight fever. Serious side effects are rare.

Start protecting your baby at birth with the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine.



Where can I get more information?

- ❖ Your Health Care Provider
- ❖ New Jersey Department of Health Vaccine Preventable Disease Program
609-826-4860
<http://nj.gov/health/cd/vdpd/index.shtml>
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/B/index.htm>
- ❖ Immunization Action Coalition (IAC)
www.immunize.org/birthdose

To print this brochure, please visit:

- <http://nj.gov/health/cd/hepatitisb/index.shtml>
- http://nj.gov/health/cd/hepatitisb_perinatal/index.shtml

Please consult with your health care provider for your specific needs. This brochure is not a substitute for medical advice.

Special thanks to the Washington State Department of Health for permission to modify this brochure.



Start protecting your baby at birth with hepatitis B vaccine



What is hepatitis B disease?

Hepatitis B disease is caused by a virus that attacks the liver. It can lead to severe illness, liver cancer and, in some cases, death.

Many people who get hepatitis B do not look or feel sick. Others may have a loss of appetite, stomach pain, extreme tiredness or yellowing of the skin or eyes.

How is hepatitis B spread?

Hepatitis B virus can spread by:

- ❖ contact with blood or certain body fluids of an infected person
- ❖ an infected mother to her newborn during childbirth
- ❖ using unsterile needles for injecting drugs, body piercing or tattooing
- ❖ using contaminated razors, toothbrushes, wash cloths and nail clippers
- ❖ unprotected sex
- ❖ human bites
- ❖ living with someone who has hepatitis B infection

Hepatitis B is **NOT** spread through food or water, kissing, sharing eating utensils, breastfeeding or coughing. The virus is not found in sweat, tears or urine.



Why should pregnant women be concerned about hepatitis B?

A mother with hepatitis B can spread the disease to her newborn. Babies are less able to fight hepatitis B infection than older children or adults. If a baby is infected, there is a 90% chance he or she will develop chronic hepatitis B, the most serious form of the disease.

Chronic hepatitis B can eventually lead to serious health problems, including liver damage, liver cancer, and even death.

How could my baby come in contact with the hepatitis B virus?

In many cases, the hepatitis B virus passes from mother to baby during birth when the mother does not know she is infected. In other cases, the virus is spread to the baby during close contact with an infected family member, caregiver or friend. Most people who are infected with hepatitis B do not feel sick and have no idea they carry this virus.

You and your baby are at higher risk for hepatitis B infection if you, your parents or someone you live with was born in:

**Africa
Alaska
Eastern Europe
Middle East**

**South America
South Asia
Western Pacific**



What can I do to protect my baby?

Get your baby vaccinated! The hepatitis B vaccine is given as 3 or 4 shots, depending upon the brand of vaccine used. After the first shot is given in the hospital, the next shot is usually given at 1-2 months of age. The last shot is given between 6 months and 18 months of age. Ask your doctor when your baby needs to come back for the next shot in the series.

Infants born to mothers with hepatitis B infection will need to receive the hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) shot **AND** the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine within 12 hours of birth.



CDC recommends that all babies get the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine before leaving the hospital.