



Important Facts for Parents to Know about

The Hepatitis B Vaccine

The hepatitis B vaccine protects against hepatitis B virus, which can cause severe liver damage, liver cancer, and death as early as age 30.

- Hepatitis B virus also causes short-term illnesses, like diarrhea and vomiting, tiredness, loss of appetite, jaundice, and pain in muscles, joints, and stomach.
- Each year, approximately 4,000 to 5,000 children are infected with hepatitis B in the United States. Most of those infected will develop liver cancer or other liver disease before the age of 40.

The vaccine effectively protects at least 95% children, adolescents, and adults who receive the full series of shots.

The majority of children who receive the vaccine (more than 65% of children) will have *no side effects* at all. Of those few children who do have a side effect, most will have only a very mild reaction.

- Mild reactions include soreness where the shot was given or a slight fever.
- Aspirin-free pain reliever can be used to reduce fever and soreness.

In very rare cases (far less than 1 child out of 10,000 shots given, or about 0.002%) children have a serious allergic reaction.

- Signs of a serious reaction include having trouble breathing, being hoarse or wheezy, getting hives, becoming pale or weak, having a very fast heart beat or feeling dizzy.
- If you do notice any serious reactions, you should call your doctor immediately.

Your child's chance of being harmed by hepatitis B disease is far greater than any chance of being harmed by the vaccine.

- Immunizations are one of the most important ways parents can protect their children against serious infectious diseases.

parents:

Please also read the Vaccine Information Statement on the hepatitis B vaccine from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for other important information, including who should and who should not get the vaccine.