



# Combined Hepatitis (Hep A) and Hepatitis B (Hep B) Vaccination

## Patient information

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The aim of this leaflet is to give you information about Hepatitis A (Hep A) and Hepatitis B (Hep B) vaccinations.

### **What is Hep A?**

- Hep A is a virus that is carried in the blood which infects and damages the liver.
- It is passed by an infected person in bowel motions, through food and drink, contact with sewage contaminated water and sexually by oral/anal sex and anal intercourse.

### **What are the symptoms?**

- The time until symptoms show (incubation period) can be 2 – 6 weeks. First symptoms are tiredness, aches, pains, fever, loss of appetite, nausea and/or vomiting and diarrhoea.
- Jaundice (the whites of the eyes go yellow, skin may go yellow, urine may turn dark and bowel motions become pale).

It will take a while to recover from Hep A. Most people feel better within a few weeks, although they may feel tired and lack energy for many more months. You will never be infected with Hepatitis A again and unlike other hepatitis viruses, it does not cause long term liver damage.

### **What is Hep B?**

- Hep B is a virus carried in the blood which infects and damages the liver. Hep B is known as a 'blood-borne virus' (BBV) and is spread by blood to blood contact.
- Even a tiny amount of blood from someone who has the virus can pass on the infection if it gets into an open wound, a cut or scratch, or from a contaminated needle.
- Hep B can be passed on through unprotected sex, even oral sex.
- Tattoos, body piercing and medical or dental treatment in countries where equipment is not properly sterilised can also pose a risk of transmission.

### What are the symptoms?

- The incubation period is typically 90 days with often no symptoms or a mild illness with symptoms such as tiredness, aches and pains, fever and/or a loss of appetite, inability to tolerate cigarettes or alcohol, feeling sick and vomiting, diarrhoea, jaundice.
- Hep B can cause long term liver damage.

### Side effects some people may get after having a Hep A/B vaccination

- Headache
- Pain or 'dead arm' feeling or where the injection went in
- Feeling tired
- Feeling sick
- Diarrhoea
- Redness, bruising, itching or swelling where the injection went in
- Generally feeling unwell

1st vaccination given	
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### Vaccination

A vaccine is a substance containing an 'inactivated' form of Hepatitis B. This means very weakened or dead and cannot cause disease. It is introduced into your body in the vaccine to cause your own immune system to react and produce 'antibodies' that can protect you from ever getting the Hepatitis B virus.

The vaccination is given to you by injection in the muscle at the top of your arm. The vaccine can be given with different time periods between injections.

Usually the first injection is followed by a second dose a week later and another two weeks after that.

A booster injection will be given 1 year after the initial injection.

It is also possible to have this vaccine combined with a Hepatitis A vaccine, which works in the same way, and is very useful if you need to be protected against both diseases.

### Vaccine schedule dates:

2nd vaccination due	
2nd vaccination given	

3rd vaccination due	
3rd vaccination given	

4th vaccination due	
4th vaccination given	

**For further information, contact:**

The Health Adviser  
Sexual Health Clinic  
Level 7  
South Block  
Ninewells Hospital  
Dundee DD1 9SY  
Telephone: 01382 632600

**Other sources of information:**

British Liver Trust  
Free Helpline  
Telephone: 0800 652 7300

**On line:** <http://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/home.aspx>

<http://www.hepb.org.uk/information>

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This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats on request  
Speak to the nurse/health professional looking after you to arrange this