

## Hepatitis A & B



### World Map

The map shows where Hepatitis A can be contracted.

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### Types of vaccines

Various pharmaceutical companies market vaccines against Hepatitis A.

- Sanofi Pasteur offers **Avaxim**
- GlaxoSmithKline offers **Havrix**
- Merck Frosst offers **VAQTA**

The Hepatitis A vaccine is very effective. While individuals usually require 2 doses (spaced 6 months apart), some vaccines actually give you 90-95% protection after the 1st dose. The 2nd dose provides protection for 20 years. Various pharmaceutical companies market vaccines against Hepatitis B.

- GlaxoSmithKline offers **ENGERIX B**
- Merck Frosst offers **RECOMBIVAX HB**

The Hepatitis B vaccine is very effective. While individuals usually require at least 3 doses (spaced 0, 1 and 6 months apart) some vaccines actually give you >75% protection after the 2nd dose. The 3rd dose provides protection for 20 years.

This information is provided to you free of charge by Cas Medic healthcare professionals. If you would like more information on vaccine services for Hepatitis A and/or Hepatitis B, do not hesitate to contact us. If you suspect you may have been exposed, Cas Medic can also perform routine blood tests to confirm or rule out your exposure or immunity. Be sure to contact your doctor if you have any doubts about your state of health!

### Combination vaccines

#### Twinrix

GlaxoSmithKline markets the combination vaccine Twinrix, which is by far the most popular vaccine on the market today. Twinrix combines the Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccine. More information on Hepatitis B can be found by clicking here.

#### Vivaxim

Sanofi Pasteur markets the vaccine Vivaxim, which protects against Hepatitis A and Typhoid Fever. For more information on Typhoid fever, click here.

Hepatitis implies inflammation of the liver characterized by the presence of inflammatory cells in the organ tissue. The condition can be self-limiting (healing on its own) or can progress to fibrosis (scarring) and cirrhosis<sup>1</sup>. The name also refers to a group of viral infections that affect the liver. The most common types are Hepatitis A, B and C.

### Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A, caused by infection with the Hepatitis A virus (HAV), has an incubation period of approximately 28 days (range: 15–50 days). HAV replicates in the liver and is shed in high concentrations in feces from 2 weeks before the onset of clinical illness to one week after. HAV infection produces a self-limited disease that does not result in chronic infection or chronic liver disease<sup>2</sup>.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) states that, "Hepatitis A is one of the most common vaccine-preventable infections acquired during travel. It is a contagious liver disease that is easily spread from person to person or through eating food or drinking water contaminated with feces."<sup>3</sup>

Because this disease is the most common preventable infection, it is recommended that all persons be vaccinated against this virus.

### Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). It can be prevented by a vaccine. HBV is about 100 times more infectious than HIV.

It is estimated that between 0.7 and 0.9% of Canada's population is chronically infected with HBV. About 5% of the population have had hepatitis B at some point in their lives (prior acute infection). In 2008, the overall reported rate of acute hepatitis B infection in Canada was 0.74 (individuals infected) per 100,000 people living in Canada.

HBV is found in the blood and body fluids (semen, vaginal fluid and saliva) of an infected person. The virus is most commonly spread through: sexual contact with an infected person; sharing contaminated needles and other drug-using paraphernalia (e.g., straws, pipes, spoons and cookers); by sharing personal care articles such as razors, scissors, nail clippers or a toothbrush with an infected person; or from an infected mother to newborn infant at the time of birth. In countries where the infection is widespread and where standard precautions are not always practiced during medical or dental procedures, transmission of the virus is common. The virus can also be transmitted in the workplace from exposure to an infected person's blood or body fluids. Transmission through saliva not visibly contaminated with blood is uncommon<sup>5</sup>.

The incubation period from the time of exposure to onset of symptoms is 6 weeks to 6 months. HBV is found in highest concentrations in blood and in lower concentrations in other body fluids (e.g., semen, vaginal secretions, and wound exudates). HBV infection can be self-limited or chronic<sup>6</sup>.

Viral hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation. In the USA, an estimated 1.2 million Americans are living with chronic Hepatitis B and 3.2 million are living with chronic Hepatitis C. Many do not know they are infected. Each year an estimated 25,000 persons become infected with Hepatitis A; 43,000 with Hepatitis B; and 17,000 with Hepatitis C<sup>8</sup>.

1 [wikipedia.org/wiki/Hepatitis](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Hepatitis)

2 [cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/index.htm](http://cdc.gov/hepatitis/HAV/index.htm)

3 [phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmw/info/hepa-eng.php](http://phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmw/info/hepa-eng.php)

4 [wikipedia.org/wiki/Hepatitis](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Hepatitis)

5 [phac-aspc.gc.ca/hcai-iamss/bbp-pts/hepatitis/hep\\_b-eng.php](http://phac-aspc.gc.ca/hcai-iamss/bbp-pts/hepatitis/hep_b-eng.php)

6 [cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/index.htm](http://cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/index.htm)

7 [cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/index.htm](http://cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/index.htm) 13 [cdc.gov/hepatitis/](http://cdc.gov/hepatitis/)

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