Give a lifetime of protection from hepatitis B disease.

Hepatitis B virus is a leading cause of cancer in the United States and the world. The hepatitis B vaccine prevents liver cancer caused by hepatitis B virus.

All babies need the protection that three doses of the hepatitis B vaccine provide.

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

Vaccine safety

The hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective. It has been used in the U.S. since 1982. More than one billion doses of hepatitis B vaccine have been given worldwide.

The most common reactions to the vaccine are soreness where the shot is given and mild to moderate fever. These side effects may last 1–2 days.

Additional resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- 1-800-232-4636 (tty) 1-888-232-6348
- www.cdc.gov/nip/menus/vaccines.htm

Immunization Action Coalition
- www.immunize.org/birthdose

Washington State Department of Health
- 1-866-397-0337
- www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/hepatitisprevention.htm

WithinReach, The Family Health Hotline
- 1-800-322-2588
- www.withinreachwa.org

Public Health – Seattle & King County
Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program
- 206-296-4774
- http://www.metrokc.gov/HEALTH/prevcont/phbpp.htm

For information on how to obtain hepatitis B vaccine for your baby, call your doctor, nurse, or public health clinic.

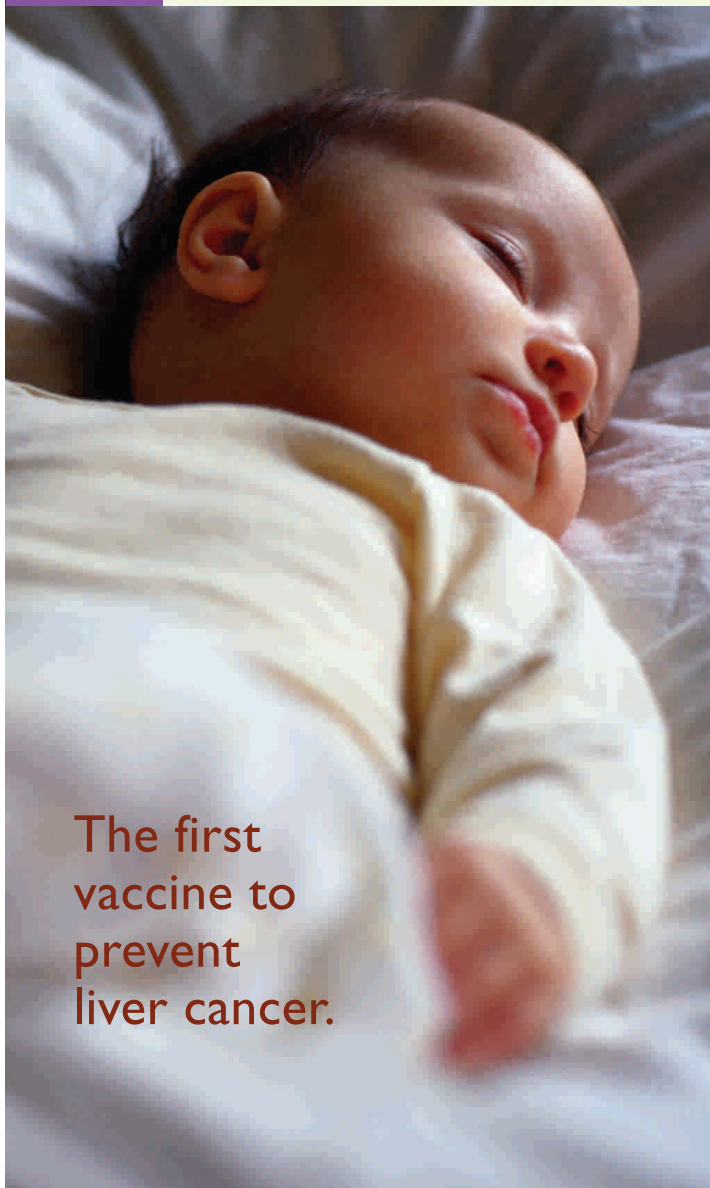
Washington State Department of Health

Public Health
Seattle & King County
HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.
City of Seattle King County

Alternate formats available upon request.

DOH Pub 348-102 5/07

Start protecting your baby at birth with hepatitis B vaccine



The first vaccine to prevent liver cancer.

Why does my baby need hepatitis B vaccine?

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.

One in four babies with chronic hepatitis B will die of liver problems (including liver cancer) later in life.

How will I know if my baby is exposed to hepatitis B?

You may *not* know if your baby is exposed. Many people with hepatitis B virus do not know they have it because they do not look or feel sick. But they can still spread the virus to others.

A baby or young child can become infected by coming in contact with a household member, caregiver or another child who has the disease.

A mother with hepatitis B can spread the disease to her newborn.

Testing of all pregnant women for hepatitis B is very important.

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 tatooing
- using contaminated razors, toothbrushes, wash cloths and nail clippers
- unprotected sex
- human bites, wound to wound contact
- living with someone who has chronic 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.

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 (rural)
- Amazon Basin
- Asia
- Eastern Europe
- Former Soviet Union
- Middle East
- Pacific Islands

What can I do to protect my baby?

The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention recommend that all babies get the hepatitis B vaccine at birth followed by two more doses within six months.

Dose 1 at Birth	Dose 2 at 1-2 Months	Dose 3 at 6 Months

All three doses of the hepatitis B vaccine are needed for the best protection.