

# Hepatitis A and B vaccination

## Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A refers to liver inflammation caused by infection with the hepatitis A virus. The hepatitis A virus is found in the stools (faeces) of infected people and is transmitted when a person puts something in their mouth that has been contaminated with the faeces of an infected person. This is referred to as faecal-oral transmission.

Food and fluids (e.g. drinking water) and other objects (e.g. hands) may become contaminated with the hepatitis A virus. This is usually because of inadequate hand washing or poor sanitary conditions. In these environments the virus can quickly spread to anyone who consumes items that have been contaminated.

## Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is also a virus that causes inflammation of the liver. The hepatitis B virus is known as a blood-borne virus because it is transmitted from one person to another via blood. The virus can be transmitted whenever infected bodily fluids come in contact with the broken skin or a mucous membrane of a non-infected person. Hepatitis B is one of the diseases immediately investigated following accidental exposure to blood or body fluids such as a needle stick injury.

## Who is at risk?

Within the educational environment, staff should consider their potential exposure to hepatitis A or B given the routes of transmission described above.

## Vaccination

Hepatitis A and B are preventable diseases and effective vaccines are available to protect people against each of these viruses.

- Hepatitis A vaccination consists of two injections administered over 6 to 12 months.
- Hepatitis B vaccination consists of three injections over a period of approximately 7 months.
- Combination Hepatitis A/B vaccination is recommended for those at risk of exposure to both diseases.

## Costs of Vaccination

Currently, there is no preferred supplier for hepatitis A or B vaccinations. Prices will vary from location to location.

Workplaces are encouraged to make a number of enquiries and seek the best price available and most convenient process for vaccinating staff. Please note that the department's *Infection Control Guideline* indicates that costs associated with vaccination are to be funded by the workplace (this includes medical consultations).

As a rough guide the cost of hepatitis vaccine (excluding medical consultations), are approximately:

- Hepatitis A: approx \$55 per dose x 2 doses = approx \$110
- Hepatitis B: approx \$21 per dose x 3 doses = approx \$63
- Combination Vaccination A/B: approx \$65 per dose x 3 doses = approx \$195.

## Further Information

Please contact your [Regional Senior Health and Safety Consultant](#) [Infection Control Guideline](#)