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