

# Protecting Your Baby from Hepatitis B Virus

## **I'm pregnant and carry the hepatitis B virus (HBV). How can I protect my baby?**

You can protect your baby with the following 2 injections (also called shots). They work best if your baby gets them within 12 hours of being born:

- HBIG (Hepatitis B Immune Globulin) — an injection of antibodies that protects your baby from HBV right away, but the protection lasts only a short time.
- Hepatitis B vaccine — gives your baby long-lasting protection against HBV. Your baby will need a booster shot at 2 months old, 4 months old, and again at 6 months old.

## **What are the risks to my baby if I have a chronic HBV infection?**

If your baby is **not immunized**, they have:

- up to a 90% chance of getting HBV
- a 90% chance of carrying HBV for life

Of those babies who carry HBV, 25% will die from chronic liver disease.

Giving HBIG and a dose of hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth is 85% to 95% effective in preventing hepatitis B in babies born to mothers with hepatitis B infection.

## **What if another person in my home carries HBV?**

If another caregiver in your home (such as the father or nanny) carries HBV, but the birth mom doesn't, then your baby only needs the Hepatitis B vaccine. They don't need HBIG.

## **Is HBIG safe?**

- HBIG is very safe. The risk of getting an infection from HBIG is very low.
- It's made from human blood, and all blood and blood donors are fully tested to make sure there are no viruses like hepatitis or HIV.
- Viruses and bacteria in HBIG have been killed.
- Because of careful testing of blood and blood donors, there have been no reports of anyone getting viruses such as HIV, hepatitis B, or hepatitis C from HBIG.

## **What else do I need to know about HBIG?**

- We can't say HBIG comes with no risks, but your baby has a much higher risk of getting very sick if you carry HBV and your baby doesn't get HBIG.
- There is a very small chance your baby could have a serious allergic reaction to HBIG, or a local reaction such as swelling and redness where they got the needle.

## **Is the Hepatitis B vaccine safe?**

- There is no virus in the vaccine. It looks like HBV to the immune system, which teaches the immune system to make antibodies that protect against HBV.
- Most babies have no side effects. (The spot where your baby gets the needle could look a bit red for a short time.) Serious side effects are very rare.
- If your baby does get a fever or seem cranky, it might not be due to the vaccine. Take your baby to the doctor right away to check for health problems that can affect newborns, including serious infections.

## **Where can I learn more?**

See the following links to learn more about protecting your baby from hepatitis B virus:

### **Hepatitis B Vaccine (HBV)**

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hp/cdc/if-hp-cdc-hep-b-vac-info-sht-07-234-r01.pdf>

### **Protect Your Baby for Life - CDC**

<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/pdfs/hepbperinatal-protectwhenpregnant.pdf>

### **Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG) – MyHealth.Alberta.ca**

[https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/Hepatitis-B-Immune-Globulin-\(HBIG\).aspx](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/Hepatitis-B-Immune-Globulin-(HBIG).aspx)