



Information for GPs and practice nurses

Hepatitis B vaccine for at risk infants

Each year, around 3000 babies are at risk of developing hepatitis B infection following exposure to the hepatitis B virus from their mother's blood during childbirth.

Hepatitis B vaccine is prioritised for these infants and can prevent infection in around 90% of them if it is given at the right times.

The first dose should be given within 24 hours of birth and is usually administered in the delivery suite.

The second dose of vaccine should be ordered when mum registers the baby at your surgery. It needs to be given to the infant at 4 weeks of age.

Ensure that mum is aware that **the next three doses of hepatitis B containing vaccine are given to all babies at 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age** at their routine immunisation appointments. This 6 in 1 vaccine will also protect against other serious infections including diphtheria, tetanus, polio, whooping cough and haemophilus influenzae type B.

The final dose of hepatitis B vaccine should be given when baby reaches one year of age. This dose can be given at the same time as their other routine vaccines.

Testing for infection (hepatitis B surface antigen, HBsAg) is vital and can be done at the same appointment as their 12 month dose of hepatitis B vaccine.

Either take a **Dried Blood Spot (DBS)** (preferred method to prevent loss to follow up) or **refer to phlebotomy services**.

PHE Colindale provides DBS kits to local coordinators and does the testing for free.

Request DBS kits from your local Screening and Immunisation Team.

Protect the baby by vaccination

When pregnant women attend for vaccination during pregnancy

- ✔ Ask mum if they have screened positive for hepatitis B
- ✔ Tell her to register their baby at the surgery as soon as possible when born

When baby is registered

- ✔ Check if baby has had their birth dose
- ✔ Request monovalent hepatitis B vaccine
- ✔ Immunise baby at the right age and with the right interval between doses
- ✔ Take a dried blood spot test or venous blood sample to check for infection when the infant is one year old
- ✔ Keep a record of all hepatitis B vaccine doses given
- ✔ Refer child to specialist liver services if they are infected

