Hepatitis B
(Viral Infection of the Liver)

Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver caused by a germ called the hepatitis B virus (HBV). **It enters the body during sex, or by sharing intimate items such as toothbrushes, razors, or needles.** A baby can get HBV from its birth mother. A caregiver may get it from the blood of an infected patient by way of a cut or needle stick. Once in the body viral infection occurs in the liver causing illness. Your chances of getting Hepatitis B are less when you receive either the vaccine or Hepatitis B immune globulin.

ABOUT HEPATITIS B VIRUS

- Over half the people who become infected with HBV remain *subclinical* (never get sick). However some may later develop long-term liver disease (*chronic hepatitis*).
- There are 2 phases of the disease: *acute* (sudden) and *chronic* (longstanding).

Acute Phase:

- Lasts a short time, usually a few weeks to several months. Some people may get better after this phase. You may not feel like eating, may feel very tired, sick to your stomach, throw-up, and have *abdominal* (belly) pain.
- Your urine may look dark yellow, and your skin and eyes may look yellow. This is called jaundice. You may have skin rashes and joint pain.

Chronic Phase:

- Some people who are infected with HBV become "chronic carriers". They often have no *symptoms* (problems), but the virus stays in their body. They may spread the virus to others and can get long-term liver disease.
- Of every 100 young adults who get HBV, 6 to 10 become chronic carriers.
- Of every 10 babies who are infected at birth, up to 9 will become chronic HBV carriers.
- The younger a child is when the infection starts, the more likely that child will be a carrier.
- About one-fourth of HBV carriers get a disease called "chronic active hepatitis". These people may get cirrhosis, liver cancer, or liver failure.

ABOUT HEPATITIS B IMMUNE GLOBULIN (HBIG)

Why You or Your Child Should Get Hepatitis B Immune Globulin

- HBIG is often given with hepatitis B vaccine to people who have been exposed to HBV. It protects you from the virus for the first 1 to 3 months. After that, the vaccine takes over and protects you much longer. Most people only need 1 dose of HBIG to keep them from getting HBV after being exposed to it.

Who Should Get HBIG?

- Infants
  - Infants born to women who are infected with HBV.
  - Unvaccinated infants less than 1 year of age whose mother (or primary caregiver) has acute hepatitis B.
- Children and Adolescents
  - ACIP (Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices) recommends that all children and adolescents should receive the HepB immunization series. This can begin during any visit.
- Adults and Others
  - People who come in contact with blood or body fluids that may have HBV in them.
  - People having sex with someone who has acute hepatitis B.

When Should You Get HBIG?

- Infants born to women who are infected with HBV should get 1 dose of HBIG within 12 hours of birth.
- Unvaccinated infants less than 1 year of age whose primary caregiver has acute hepatitis B should get 1 dose of HBIG and start the hepatitis B vaccine series. Ask your caregiver when to start the shots.
- If you come in contact with blood or body fluids that may have HBV, you should get 1 dose of HBIG. If you have been in contact with infected blood or body fluids and have had hepatitis B shots, you may still

need HBIG. Your caregiver will help you decide whether and when to get the shot.
- If you have had sex with someone who has acute hepatitis B, you should get a dose of HBIG as soon as possible.

What Are The Risks From Getting HBIG?

There are very few risks associated with the HBIG shot. The risks from getting the shot are MUCH SMALLER than are the risks of getting the disease if people stopped getting the HBIG shot.
- The HBIG shot may cause swelling and hives.
- If you are pregnant and at risk of getting an HBV infection, you can be given HBIG. The shot should be safe for your unborn baby because it does not have the live virus in it.
- Most people who get HBIG have no problems. Some people have the following problems, which do not frequently occur:
  - A bad allergic reaction.
  - A long seizure.
  - Being less awake or in a coma.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS
- Keep utensils and glassware clean and separated from the rest of the family.
- Rest when tired and eat when hungry.
- Avoid a physical/sexual relationship until advised otherwise by your caregiver.
- Avoid activities that could expose other persons to your blood. Examples include sharing a toothbrush, nail clippers, razors, and needles.
- **WARNING:** This infection is contagious. Follow the instructions in this section and any additional instructions from your caregiver to avoid spread of your infection to others.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:
- You want to learn more about this or other vaccines. Your caregiver can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- You think you or your child has been injured by a vaccine and feel you should get compensation (payment). Call the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program at 1-800-338-2382 (toll free).
- You need to file a Vaccine Adverse Event Report form. Your caregiver or the health department can help you with this, or call 1-800-822-7967 (toll free).

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- You are unable to eat or drink.
- You experience *nausea* (feeling sick to your stomach) or vomiting.
- Confusion occurs.
- Jaundice becomes progressively more severe.
- You have swelling of the skin, throat, mouth or face, trouble breathing, or a rash. You may be having an allergic reaction to the medicine in the shot.
- You are having a *seizure* (jerking and blank staring).
- You are confused, very sleepy or you cannot wake up.

MAKE SURE YOU:
- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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