

HEPATITIS B

INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction:

As future health care workers, it is important that students recognise the need to demonstrate immunity to vaccine preventable diseases as part of professional practice. The following information sheet provides an overview of a Hepatitis B vaccination course to ensure protection and longevity of protection and how to provide appropriate evidence for Clinical Placement.

Hepatitis B is a viral disease primarily affecting the liver. A large proportion of those who are chronically infected will develop liver related issues which account for considerable morbidity and mortality. Hepatitis B is prevalent in the community and preventable through a vaccination course.

Providing Evidence for Hepatitis B

Students can provide evidence of Hepatitis B protection in several different ways:

1. Provide evidence of an appropriate course (this must include date, batch number, medical practitioner signature with official practice stamp) and post vaccination serology indicating Anti-HBs greater than 10mIU/mL.

OR

2. If you have been previously immunised, but do not have evidence, please complete the Declaration indicating that you have completed the Hepatitis B vaccine and post vaccination serology indicating Anti-HBs greater than 10mIU/mL.

OR

3. Some students may have developed immunity through previous infection. In this instance, students can attach a serology of Anti-HBc (not Anti-HBs), indicating past Hepatitis B infection.

Hepatitis B Immunisation Schedule:

As with all vaccinations, students must undertake the appropriate vaccine schedule in a timely manner to ensure the best chance of vaccine protection and longevity of that protection. Students presenting evidence of vaccinations without undertaking the correct vaccination schedule may be required to undertake further booster vaccinations and provide evidence to ensure longevity of protection.

Age-Appropriate Vaccination Schedule

Different vaccination schedules are recommended for different age groups/settings:

For infants: birth dose, then at 2, 4 and 6 months of age.

For children/adolescents and adults: standard 3-dose schedule (at 1 month and 6 months from 1st dose).

For adolescents aged 11-15 years: a 2-dose schedule using adult formulation vaccine (Engerix-B or H-B/Vax II) is acceptable (as is used in school-based catch-up programs).

Other schedules can be indicated for adults with particular medical conditions and for travelers.

Adult Vaccination Course:

Most students will undertake an adult vaccination for Hepatitis B. The standard vaccine is Engerix (or Twinrix for combined Hep B & A vaccination) and has a 3-dose schedule at 0, 1 and 6 months. Serology will need to be undertaken 4-8 weeks post final dose to ensure Anti-HBs greater than 10mIU/mL.

Non-Response to Hepatitis B Vaccination:

For further information, contact the Health Services Unit at 011 334 2342 or visit the website at www.healthservices.co.za.

