



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Vaccination against Hepatitis B

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:
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01904 725963

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What is hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is an infection caused by the hepatitis B virus. The infection mainly affects the liver. If you are infected the virus is found in your body fluids such as blood and saliva.

An infected person might not show symptoms and in some people the virus remains in the body long term. The people who have this virus long term are known as carriers and can pass the virus to other people. Some carriers can eventually develop serious liver disease

Why am I at risk?

If you are on haemodialysis you are at risk of exposure to blood and other body fluids during treatment. This means you are more susceptible to contracting the hepatitis B virus and vaccination is recommended.

What can protect me from hepatitis B?

The renal team take all appropriate precautions when dialysing patients to ensure minimum exposure to any blood borne infection.

The Department of Health and the Renal Association recommend all patients with chronic kidney failure should be vaccinated against the hepatitis B virus. This vaccination encourages the production of antibodies. This prepares your body to fight the virus if it enters your blood stream.

Vaccination against hepatitis B also prevents the disease from spreading and putting other kidney patients at risk.

As soon as you know that you might require dialysis or a kidney transplant, you should be advised to have the hepatitis B vaccine.

How is the vaccination given?

We will send your GP a copy of the vaccination guidance and ask your GP to make arrangements for you to have the hepatitis B vaccination.

The vaccine is given as an intramuscular injection into the upper arm. You will need a course of three or four injections over a six month time period. The number of injections you will need will depend on the type of injection your GP obtains.

HBvaxPRO 40 microgram, Engerix B and Fendrix can all be used for patients with chronic kidney failure. The surgery will usually try to complete the course of injections using the same brand of vaccine. This may not always be possible if the brand vaccine used first is not available when your next dose is due. To avoid missing or delaying your injection it is possible to change the brand of vaccine part way through the course.

People with chronic kidney failure do not always respond well to the vaccination in terms of producing antibodies to hepatitis B. Because of this you will be given a higher dose than would be sufficient for most people. Always check with the nurse or doctor that you are being given the correct dose when you are having the vaccination.

How will I know if the vaccine has been effective?

The vaccination is only effective if the full course of three or four injections is completed.

Your response to the vaccine can be measured with a blood test to check your post vaccine antibody levels. Some people have good antibody levels and may never require a booster dose of vaccine. In most people antibody levels fall gradually over a period of time and you may be advised to have a booster dose of vaccine to increase or boost your antibody levels.

Sometimes a repeat course of injections is advised. This will only happen if your antibody levels are very low following the first course of vaccinations. We will only recommend a maximum of two full courses of vaccine.

Will there be any side effects?

Hepatitis vaccinations are well tolerated and the most common reaction is soreness or redness at the site of injection. Other reported reactions include fever, rash, tiredness and flu like symptoms. If you are concerned please speak to your nurse or doctor.

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Renal Pharmacists, Renal Department, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 725963 or email RenalPharmacy@york.nhs.uk.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

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或發電

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