

Hepatitis B Immune Globulin

What is Hepatitis B Immune Globulin?

- Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG) is a sterile solution of ready-made antibodies against hepatitis B. Antibodies are proteins that our immune system makes to fight germs after we are exposed to them.

Why is Hepatitis B Immune Globulin needed?

- Hepatitis B infection is a viral disease of the liver which can result in severe illness or even death. Some people go on to have long-lasting liver problems and may be able to infect others for years.
- HBIG is recommended following exposure to hepatitis B because it provides immediate, short-term protection against the virus. A dose of hepatitis B vaccine can be given at the same time. HBIG provides protection against hepatitis B while the body is still making antibodies to the vaccine.
- While HBIG may provide protection for up to 2 months, hepatitis B disease can develop up to 6 months after an exposure.

How is Hepatitis B Immune Globulin given?

- HBIG is given by injection. For adults it is given into either the large upper muscle of the arm or the large upper muscle of the buttock.
- In order to be effective, HBIG must be given as soon as possible after exposure, preferably within 48 hours. It must be given within 7 days of significant exposure to infected blood.

Possible vaccine reactions

- Some possible side-effects include soreness, redness and stiffness of muscles around the injection site lasting for several hours. Mild fever or just not feeling well may also occur.
- With any vaccine or drug there is a possibility of a shock-like allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). This can be hives, wheezy breathing, or swelling of some part of the body. If this happens, particularly swelling around the throat, immediately get to your family doctor or hospital emergency.
- It is suggested that persons stay in the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving any type of immunization.

Report serious reactions to your local public health nurse or family doctor.

Note: Acetaminophen is recommended if there is fever or pain following immunization.

What should I know about getting Hepatitis B Immune Globulin?

- HBIG **may** interfere with the antibody response to vaccines such as measles, mumps or rubella. Therefore, use of these vaccines should be delayed if possible until approximately three months after HBIG injection. Persons who were vaccinated against measles, mumps, or rubella two weeks or less before receiving HBIG should have that vaccination repeated 3 months after the HBIG was received. HBIG does not interfere with the antibody response to hepatitis B vaccine.

Why should I NOT receive Hepatitis B Immune Globulin?

You should NOT receive HBIG if:

- You have a history of shock-like allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of HBIG or any of its components. HBIG components include a glycine stabilizer and sodium carbonate (used to adjust the degree of acidity or alkalinity of the HBIG). HBIG contains NO preservative.
- You have a very low platelet count or you have a serious blood clotting disorder. In this situation your risk of intramuscular bleeding following the injection is greater than your risk of getting hepatitis B from the exposure.

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