Hepatitis B Vaccine and Kidney Disease
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What is Hepatitis B?

- “Hepatitis” means swelling of the liver.
- Hepatitis B is a virus (germ) that attacks the liver. The liver is a vital organ that helps digest the food your body needs, cleans the blood and fights infection. When the liver is hurt, it may not work as well as it should.
- Some people who get this virus are very sick, with fever, a yellow color skin and eyes (jaundice), vomiting, and belly pain.
- About half the people who have the virus never feel sick, and they can spread the disease without knowing it.
Why do I need to get vaccinated?

• Hepatitis B is spread when blood or other body fluids from a person with the virus enter the body of someone who does not have the virus.
• People with kidney disease who may need dialysis in the future or who may need a kidney transplant have a greater chance of getting Hepatitis B.
• The virus can cause serious liver problems, including liver damage, liver failure, and liver cancer.

The best way to prevent Hepatitis B is to get vaccinated.

What is the Hepatitis B vaccine?

• Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and works well to protect you from the virus. It has been safely used in Canada for more than 20 years and contains no blood or living virus.
• The vaccine is given as a series of 3 shots over a period of 6 months. The entire series is needed to protect you over the long-term.
• Each shot will be given by a clinic nurse in the Renal Clinic at Capital Health. After your first shot, you will be booked to return to Renal Clinic in 1 month to get your second shot. The last shot will be booked 6 months after your first shot.
• We ask you to stay in clinic for 15 minutes after each shot so we can watch you for side effects. As with any vaccine, there is a small chance that a more serious side effect could happen.
• One month after your third shot, you will be asked to have a blood test to check if you are protected from the Hepatitis B virus. If you are still not protected, a second series of shots will be given. Your nurse will talk with you about this if needed.
• Every year, you will have a blood test to make sure you are still protected from the virus.

What are the possible side effects from the vaccine?

• Burning and/or stinging at the place where you got your shot at the time of getting the vaccine (this will last for only a short time).
• Pain, swelling, and redness at the place where you got your shot (this will last for only a short time after the shot).
• Fever (can be treated with acetaminophen such as Tylenol).
• If you get a fever and it lasts longer than 24 hours, please call the Renal Clinic.

Who should not receive the vaccine?

• Those that have a fever or illness other than a minor cold.
• Those that have had a life threatening reaction to a previous dose of Hepatitis B vaccine or any other part the vaccine is made of.
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Capital Health, Nova Scotia
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Designed and Printed by: Capital Health Audio Visual and Printing Departments

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WQ85-1425 Created Dec. 2011
The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years.