

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B immunisation is now available to the following frontline roles.

- Police Constable
- Police Community Support Officer
- Special Constable
- Detective Staff Investigator
- Neighbourhood Investigation Officer
- Custody Detention Sergeants
- Crime Scene Investigation
- Disaster Victim Identification
- Roles undertaking laboratory and handling of clinical waste and contaminated property work

What is Hepatitis?

Acute hepatitis B infection is a short-term illness that can lead to fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, jaundice (yellow skin or eyes, dark urine, clay-coloured bowel movements), and pain in the muscles, joints, and stomach.

Chronic hepatitis B infection is a long-term illness that occurs when the hepatitis B virus remains in a person's body. Most people who go on to develop chronic hepatitis B do not have symptoms, but it is still very serious and can lead to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer, and death. Chronically infected people can spread hepatitis B virus to others, even if they do not feel or look sick themselves.

Hepatitis B is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluid infected with the hepatitis B virus enters the body of a person who is not infected. People can become infected through:

- Blood, Vomit, Saliva, Urine, Faeces, Sweat, Semen / vaginal fluid and Pus
- Exposure to blood from needlesticks or other sharp instruments

It can get transmitted by:

- **First Aid administration:** RTC's / other accidents
- **Public order situations:** Assaults / During restraint
- **Scene of crime:** Sudden death
- **Incorrect searching techniques**

Hepatitis B is a liver disease that can cause mild illness lasting a few weeks, or it can lead to a serious, lifelong illness.

Hepatitis B vaccine can prevent hepatitis B. The best way to protect against hepatitis B is to get a vaccination.

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What does it entail?

Hepatitis B vaccine is given as 3 separate injections into the upper arm over a 6-month period (at zero, one month and six months).

Three months after the third vaccine a blood test is required to determine immunity. Further details regarding the required blood test will be shared with you.

A booster may be required if you receive a low response to the vaccine doses.

The vaccine stimulates the body's immune system to fight a possible hepatitis B infection without causing the disease itself. It cannot protect you from hepatitis B if you are already infected. It also cannot protect you against any other type of liver infection, or other types of hepatitis.

How to book a Hepatitis B appointment

We are partnering with Lloyds Pharmacy who has several pharmacies across Derbyshire and the surrounding counties.

Each pharmacy will have different opening hours, but overall, there is good availability on late evenings and weekends.

We would encourage you to book your first appointment prior to your start date with the force.

To book an appointment please click [here](#).

- To find a pharmacy enter your postcode and select 'Book pharmacy Appointment' with your chosen pharmacy.
- Select the date and time suitable to you.
- Complete the personal details form - you will need your collar number to complete the booking.
- Once booked you will receive a notification via email with the details of your appointment. If at any point
- you wish to cancel or amend your appointment, you are able to do so via the link within your email notification.
- On the day of your appointment the pharmacy will book your next Hep B appointment.

How to stay safe

Please follow the Universal Precautions (please see leaflet) as this will reduce the risk of a body fluid exposure/sharps injury.

It should be noted that a Hepatitis B vaccination will only offer some protection against one of the blood borne viral infections, which is why this guidance is relevant and should be adhered to.

Further information and guidance

If you have any medical questions please contact the Occupational Health Department:

Derbyshire: 0300 122 8727

Leicester: 0116 248 2073

Appointment Queries please contact the HR Shared Service Centre on 0300 122 8900 select Employee Service or via email HRSC@Derbyshire.Police.UK.

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Frequently asked questions

- 1. Is Hepatitis B vaccine mandatory?**
The vaccine is not mandatory, but it is beneficial to protect yourself against Hepatitis B in the same way as you may have protected yourself against other communicable diseases such as measles, tuberculosis and Covid -19.
- 2. I'm currently taking other medication – can I still be immunised?**
Most medications do not impact on your ability to have the Hepatitis B vaccine but always tell your vaccinator what medication you are taking.
- 3. Is Hepatitis B vaccine safe?**
The Hepatitis B vaccine is very safe and has been used for many years.
- 4. Are there any side-effects? What are the symptoms?**
Other than some redness or soreness at the injection site side effects are very rare.
- 5. I've already had Hep B injection am I required to have these again?**
One injection does not give you full cover you need the course of 3 injections to get the full immunity.
- 6. Can I donate blood if I have hepatitis B?**
You can donate blood if you are vaccinated, you cannot donate blood if you have Hepatitis B infection.
- 7. I think I've been infected what action do I need to take?**
If it is in the workplace follow the guidance:
If a puncture wound – Encourage wound to bleed. Do not suck wound.
Wash wound/exposed area with soap and running water but without scrubbing. Where the eyes or mouth have been exposed to blood or bodily fluids they should be washed copiously with water.
Always report incident to line manager and Occupational Health.
If Occupational Health is unavailable or it is outside office hours report to Accident and Emergency.
For injuries – report to Accident and Emergency immediately.
- 8. How long does protection from hepatitis B vaccine last?**
Years ago, the standard 3-round Hepatitis B vaccine provided protection for up to seven years. However, today's vaccines provide you with more than 20 years of protection. Some at risk groups may require more frequent booster e.g. if immune suppressed.
- 9. Can hepatitis B vaccine be administered concurrently with other vaccines?**
Some vaccines can be taken on the day, or they will need to be given a minimum time between them. Please tell your vaccinator if you are having another course of vaccinations and when you were last injected.
- 10. If there is an interruption between doses of hepatitis B vaccine, does the vaccine series need to be restarted?**
No, there is a protocol for when to pick up a course if the doses have been interrupted and there should be no requirement to start the course again.

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11. If the vaccine series was interrupted after the first dose, the second dose should be administered as soon as possible.
The second and third doses should be separated by an interval of at least 8 weeks.
If only the third dose is delayed, it should be administered as soon as possible.
12. Is it harmful to administer an extra dose(s) of hepatitis B vaccine or repeat the entire vaccine series if documentation of vaccination history is unavailable?
No. If necessary, administering extra doses of single-antigen hepatitis B vaccine is not harmful.
13. Can Hepatitis B vaccines be given during pregnancy and breast feeding?
Yes, it is safe to give pregnant or breast-feeding women the vaccination. If I started the vaccine series but didn't complete my 2nd or 3rd dose on schedule, do I have to start over?
Please see question 10.
14. I received my vaccine years ago--am I still protected?
Yes, the body retains cell memory to fight infections.
15. Can a patient receive the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine from one manufacturer and subsequent doses from another manufacturer?
Yes. When feasible, vaccines from the same manufacturer should be used to complete the series, but vaccination should not be deferred when the manufacturer of the previously administered vaccine is unknown or when the vaccine from the same manufacturer is unavailable. The vaccinator will just need to check the schedules.
16. Who should not have a Hepatitis B vaccination?
Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to a prior dose of hepatitis B vaccine, a component of the hepatitis B vaccine, or yeast should not receive hepatitis B vaccine. When hepatitis B vaccine is administered as part of a combination vaccine, contraindications to other vaccines should be checked.

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