

Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG): What Parents Need to Know

What is hepatitis B Immune Globulin?

HBIG is an injectable medication that provides antibodies to fight the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBIG works with the body's natural defenses to prevent or make an HBV infection less severe. Babies exposed to HBV during pregnancy and at birth get an injection of HBIG to protect them until they can complete the hepatitis B vaccine series. HBIG provides only temporary protection and *does not* replace hepatitis B vaccine.

What is hepatitis B and how it is spread?

Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection in the world. Chronic infection occurs in 80%-90% of infected infants. Chronic hepatitis B is a lifelong infection that can lead to:

- Liver damage (cirrhosis)
- Liver cancer
- Early death

HBV spreads through contact with an infected person's blood or other body fluids. The virus can pass from mother to baby during pregnancy and at delivery.

Why does your baby need HBIG?

A baby whose mother is infected with HBV can become infected during pregnancy and at delivery. Because of the risk that an infected newborn could develop chronic hepatitis B, any baby born to a mother who is *or who might be* infected should receive HBIG.

- A baby whose mother is known to have hepatitis B should receive HBIG soon after birth.
- A baby weighing less than 2,000 grams (4.4lbs) born to a mother *who might be infected with* HBV also should receive HBIG soon after birth.

Why does your baby also need hepatitis B vaccine?

Because their immune systems are not fully developed at birth, babies can catch serious infections in their first months of life. The possibility that an HBV infection could turn into chronic hepatitis B means that even more care is needed to keep your baby protected.

Any baby born to a mother who has hepatitis B or who might have an undiagnosed HBV infection should receive *both* HBIG *and* all recommended doses of hepatitis B vaccine.

HBIG provides immediate protection that lasts 4 to 6 months, time enough for the vaccine to help build a baby's natural defenses.

How can you protect your baby from hepatitis B?

Your baby should get both HBIG and the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine within 12 hours of being born.

In the months that follow, your baby should get either:

- 2 doses of a vaccine that protects against hepatitis B only (a single-antigen vaccine for a total of 3 doses).

or

- 3 doses of a vaccine that protects, against hepatitis B plus other infections (e.g., a combination vaccine for a total of 4 doses).

If your baby weighed less than 2,000 grams (4.4lbs) at birth and is completing the hepatitis B vaccine series with single-antigen vaccine, your baby should get a total of 4 doses.

Your baby should receive their last dose of hepatitis B vaccine at 24 weeks of age (6 months). At 9-12 months of age, your baby should be tested to see if they are protected from hepatitis B.

How well does HBIG work?

HBIG is 71% effective at preventing hepatitis B from being passed to a baby during birth. When HBIG is combined with the hepatitis B vaccine birth dose, effectiveness rises to 94%.

What are the side effects of HBIG?

Serious side effects related to HBIG are rare. As with any injection, a baby who receives HBIG might have temporary pain, redness, or swelling where the injection was given, or feel general discomfort or pain.

PHBPP Coordinator contact information:



*Reference: *MMWR*, January 12, 2018, Vol 67, (1);1-31, Prevention of Hepatitis B Virus Infection in the United States: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee Immunization Practices. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/rr/rr6701a1.htm>

