

Give birth to the end of Hep B

FROM THE IMMUNIZATION ACTION COALITION



Nearly one in three U.S. newborns leaves the hospital unprotected from life-threatening hepatitis B infection. As a result, approximately 800 U.S. newborns are chronically infected each year through perinatal exposure.

A birth dose of HepB vaccine can prevent perinatal transmission – yet today, only 70% of U.S. infants receive the vaccine within three days of birth. That's why the Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) is urging hospitals and birthing centers to meet the national standard of care by providing a universal birth dose of HepB vaccine.

Why should we give HepB vaccine to *all* newborns?

- **It prevents mother-to-infant transmission**
Prevents 70%–95% of transmission to infants born to HBsAg-positive women
- **It prevents household transmission**
Protects infants from infected family members and other caregivers
- **It provides protection if medical errors occur**
Provides a safety net to prevent perinatal transmission when medical errors occur

Why is a safety net needed? Because medical errors happen!

Reported medical errors include:

- Ordering the wrong hepatitis B screening test
- Misinterpreting or mistranscribing hepatitis B test results
- Failing to communicate results to or within the hospital
- Not giving hepatitis B vaccine to infants born to mothers of unknown HBsAg status within 12 hours of birth
- Not giving prophylaxis to an infant even when the mother's HBsAg-positive status is documented

To comply with CDC's national standard of care for the hepatitis B vaccine birth dose, birthing institutions should:

1. Implement the recommended “universal HepB vaccine birth dose policy” by way of a standard newborn admission order. This ensures that a dose of HepB vaccine is administered within 24 hours of birth to all medically stable newborns who weigh more than 2000 g (2 kg).
2. Follow national recommendations for prophylaxis of infants born to women who are HBsAg positive or whose HBsAg status is unknown.
3. Measuring birth dose coverage rates in newborns can be a useful quality improvement activity for birthing institutions.

The HepB birth dose is recommended by the:

- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

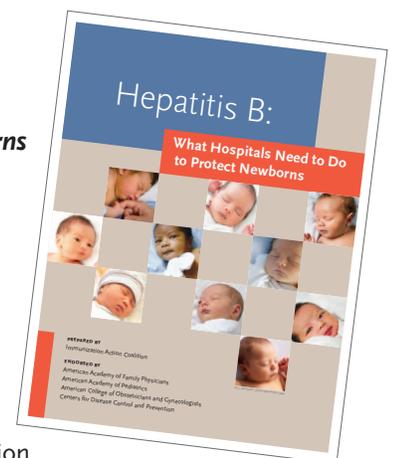
CDC's complete hepatitis B birth dose recommendations are found at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/rr/pdfs/rr6701-H.pdf.



IAC's complete guide

Hepatitis B: What Hospitals Need to Do to Protect Newborns is a complete resource to help birthing institutions establish, implement, and optimize their birth dose policies.

Endorsed by AAFP, AAP, ACOG, and CDC, IAC's e-book breaks new ground as a policy and best practice guide for newborn hepatitis B immunization.



 **Download the guide at www.immunize.org/protect-newborns**