

# Hepatitis B Vaccination Guidance for Staff and Students



<b>File Name:</b> Hepatitis B Vac. Guidance2015	<b>Revision:</b> 0	<b>Date of Issue:</b>
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## 1.0 POLICY

### Introduction

It is the responsibility of the DIT Health and Safety Office together with each Head of School/Function to ensure relevant staff and students have been offered the Hepatitis B vaccination series where appropriate. Please read this document carefully.

## 2.0 SCOPE

### Exposure

In a laboratory, individuals experimenting with the following materials or working with equipment that may be contaminated with such materials are eligible for the vaccine;

- Hepatitis B virus;
- Human blood or body fluids, blood products, or blood cells ;
- Unfixed human tissue;
- Human cell lines (If the cells are capable of propagating blood borne pathogens and NOT certified by commercial source as free from viral contamination. Screening methods may include PCR, polymerase chain reaction antigenic screening, or co-cultivation with various indicator cells that allow contaminants to grow; and
- Animals, their tissues, and cell lines derived from those tissues if the animal has been exposed to human cells as defined above.

The School/Function risk assessment will highlight other situations where the Hepatitis B vaccination is required by staff and students.

#### NOTE

The Health Centres and Contractors/Service Providers e.g. Noonans, are covered by their own policies and procedures for vaccinations . Insert link

Hepatitis B vaccines are not necessary for DIT first-aiders

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

### What is Hepatitis B?

The Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infects the liver. Approximately 10% of those infected will become chronic carriers of the HBV. Anyone who carries the virus, acutely or chronically can transmit the disease to others. Of those infected, many will require hospitalisation and may suffer debilitating liver disease, liver scarring (cirrhosis), and liver cancer.

### **How is Hepatitis transmitted?**

HBV infected blood or certain body fluids can be transmitted by several mechanisms: percutaneous injury (e.g. a cut or poke with a contaminated object), mucous membranes exposure (e.g. eyes, nose, mouth), contact with broken skin, sexual or maternal-fetal transmission. Human cell lines, cell explants, cell tissue cultures, and animal material exposed to human cells are potentially infected with HBV and can cause occupational transmission to laboratory personnel.

### **How can Hepatitis B infection be prevented?**

The primary preventative measure against getting HBV infection is vaccination. It is highly effective and strongly recommended. Secondary, **but equally important**, preventative measures are avoiding contact with the infectious materials through a combination of environmental control measures including the use of shielding, sharps safety devices, and personnel protective equipment (e.g. gloves, masks, eye protection, gowns etc.).

### **What is the Hepatitis B vaccine?**

- The Hepatitis B vaccine is a series of three injections of a recombinant vaccine given over 6 months. This vaccine is provided to those who have a risk of exposure to blood borne pathogens while doing their job to demonstrate that the individual has acquired immunity a blood test will be done 1-2 months after the last injection.

### **Vaccine Information**

As per the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), Hepatitis B vaccines have been shown to be very safe for persons of all ages. Pain at the injection site (3%-29%) and elevated temperature >37.7°C (>99.9°F) (1%-6%) are the most frequently reported side effects among vaccine recipients. In placebo-controlled studies, these side effects were reported no more frequently among persons receiving Hepatitis B vaccine than among those receiving placebo.

## **4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **New Laboratory Projects**

For laboratories embarking on new projects involving human blood, etc. (see 2.0 above) for the first time or are adding staff/student members to such existing projects, the Head of School/Function MUST contact the DIT Health & Safety Office to ensure the following:

- **Eligible staff members are offered the vaccine; and**
- **Previously vaccinated individuals have immunity. Titers are NOT routinely performed for the general population; therefore, it is incorrect to assume that everyone who has been vaccinated is immune**
- **Students must attend the DIT Student Health Centre**

Those members declining the Hepatitis B vaccination at the time it is offered will be required to sign a statement explaining that they understand the risks associated with acquiring Hepatitis B virus infection, that they were offered the vaccination, and that if they change their mind in the future they can then receive the vaccination given similar job risk factors.

The School/Function risk assessment will highlight other areas where the vaccination is required.

## **5.0 PROCEDURES FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS**

### **Acceptance / Declination Form**

After reading the above information, you should complete the '***Acceptance / Declination Form***' and return it to your Head of School/Function.

#### **Acceptance**

If you have accepted the vaccine (which is strongly advised by DIT and the Health and Safety Authority) you can arrange your vaccination.

#### **5.1 Provision for Staff and Postgraduates**

DIT will, where applicable, forward a list of names to Medmark (Providers of specialist occupational health and medical advice for employers and employees). You may have previously received a vaccination or part thereof. This will be established on your first visit to Medmark, where you will be tested for your immunity. If you are immune, there will be no need for further visits. If you are not immune, Medmark will administer the necessary vaccines to you during subsequent visits. This vaccine will be funded by DIT.

#### **Medmark Contact Details**

**Address:** 69 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2

**Email:** [Dublin@medmark.ie](mailto:Dublin@medmark.ie)

**Phone:** 01 6761396

Please email or phone Medmark directly to book an appointment which best suits you and your timetable.

#### **5.2 Provision for Students**

The risk assessment will determine if a student member requires vaccination. In this instance, the student and members of staff should consult with the relevant Head of School/Function to look at all control measures and if necessary the student should make arrangements to attend

the DIT Student Health Centre. The Health Centre will administer the necessary vaccines at a reduced cost.

**DIT Student Health Centre**

**Address:** Linenhall/Aungier Street  
**Email:** boltonst.healthcentre@dit.ie/aungierst.health@dit.ie  
**Phone:** 01 4023614/01 4023051

Please email or phone to book an appointment which best suits you and your timetable.

**6.0 TRAINING**

The Head of School/Function will liaise with the Staff Training and Development Office to ensure that training is facilitated in line with the annual training needs analysis for staff members. The School/Function risk assessment will determine the training requirements and arrangements for students and training will be arranged and funded by the School/Function.

**7.0 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE and preventative measures will be outlined in your School/Function risk assessments.

**8.0 REFERENCES**

This information has been put together by the DIT Health & Safety Office, Medmark and the DIT Health Centre. Information was also sourced from the Health Service Executive (HSE).

**9.0 DOCUMENTATION**

All records of immunity, acceptance/declination forms for staff and students (if applicable) will be maintained on file by the Head of School/Function and a copy will also be maintained on file by Medmark/DIT Health Centre.

Version	Date	Name