

[COPY ONTO YOUR COLLEGE OR HEALTH SERVICE LETTERHEAD]

Sample Fact Sheet

Background: Hepatitis B and Vaccination

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a serious infectious disease caused by a virus that attacks the liver. The hepatitis B virus (HBV) can cause life-long infection that leads to cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, or liver failure. There is no cure for hepatitis B, but the infection can be prevented by vaccination. In 2001, about 78,000 people were infected with the virus.

Vaccination Recommendations for College Students

A vaccine is available to help protect against hepatitis B. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends vaccination of everyone age 18 and under, and anyone at high risk for hepatitis B. The American College Health Association (ACHA) recommends that all college students be vaccinated. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) recommends that all student athletes be vaccinated.

Symptoms of the Disease

Symptoms of hepatitis B can resemble the flu and may include fever, loss of appetite, low energy, joint pain, cramping, or nausea and vomiting, as well as jaundice (yellow skin or eyes). However, in about 30 percent of cases, hepatitis B causes no symptoms. Approximately one million people are chronic carriers of the disease, meaning they have no symptoms and may not know they are infected but are still able to transmit the disease to others. There is no cure for hepatitis B. Most people can manage symptoms of the disease with treatment, although 5 to 10 percent of individuals become chronic carriers of the disease.

Incidence of Hepatitis B

In 2001, an estimated 78,000 Americans were infected with hepatitis B. The majority of these were adolescents and young adults. One in 20 people now have been infected with this disease, and about one-third of those infected do not know the source of their infection. There are approximately 1.25 million chronically infected Americans.

Transmission of the Disease

Hepatitis B is contagious and spreads when the blood or other body fluids of a person with the virus are absorbed into an individual's blood stream through broken skin or mucous membranes. The hepatitis B virus can live in all body fluids of an infected person, including blood, saliva, semen, and vaginal fluids. It can enter the body through cuts, tears, or abrasions in the skin and through mucous membranes of the mouth, vagina, anus, and eyes. Hepatitis B can be transmitted through sexual contact; during contact sports; by helping someone who is injured; by sharing razors, toothbrushes, pierced earrings, or injection drug paraphernalia; or by getting a tattoo or body piercing using non-sterile instruments or needles.

Risk Factors for Hepatitis B

Anyone who comes in contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person is at risk for hepatitis B. Certain behaviors can increase the risk, including unprotected sex (vaginal, anal, and oral); contact sports (sports during which players may be exposed to each other's blood or saliva); getting a tattoo or body piercing; sharing items such as razors, earrings, and toothbrushes; sharing injection drug paraphernalia; travel abroad to areas where the disease is widespread; health care and public safety work (or other occupations that may involve exposure to infected blood or body fluids); helping someone who is bleeding; household contact with persons with chronic hepatitis virus infection; and chronic kidney dialysis.

Risk for College Students

College students may be at higher risk for hepatitis B. The highest rate of disease occurs in individuals between the ages of 20 and 49. Living in close quarters, like a college dormitory, may increase the risk of exposure to carriers. College students may be exposed to the virus during sexual contact, getting body piercings or tattoos, sharing needles or razors, during contact sports and other high-risk behaviors. Health sciences students may be exposed to body fluids or tissues from patients with hepatitis B infection. In addition, during college, students may travel abroad to areas where the disease is common.

About the Hepatitis B Vaccine

The hepatitis B vaccine is safe and effective. *You cannot get the disease from the vaccine.* The most common side effect of the vaccine is soreness at the site of the injection. Vaccination requires a series of three shots over a six-month period. After that, a booster shot is not necessary. The vaccine protects 96 percent of those who complete the three-dose vaccination series.

Other Forms of Prevention

In addition to vaccination, people can modify their behavior by using condoms during sex and avoiding tattooing and body piercing with non-sterile instruments or techniques. They also can avoid sharing needles, pierced earrings, razors, or toothbrushes.

For More Information

To learn more about hepatitis B and the vaccine, please contact your physician or visit [\[INSERT NAME OF COLLEGE HEALTH SERVICE, CAMPUS LOCATION, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND WEB-](#)

SITE]. For general information about hepatitis B among college students, visit the websites of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/Blood/HepatitisB.htm, and the American College Health Association (ACHA), www.acha.org.

The American College Health Association

The American College Health Association (ACHA), founded in 1920, is a national nonprofit organization serving and representing the interests of professionals and students in health and higher education. Its mission is to be the principal advocate and leadership organization for college and university health. The association provides advocacy, education, and services for its members to enhance their ability to improve the health of all students and the campus community.

[COPY ONTO YOUR COLLEGE OR HEALTH SERVICE LETTERHEAD]

Sample Fact Sheet

Chickenpox (Varicella): What College Students Need to Know

Chickenpox (Varicella)

Chickenpox (varicella) is a highly contagious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VSV). The disease is usually mild in children but can be severe in adults and those with impaired immune systems. Each year, approximately 11,000 people are hospitalized and 100 die due to chickenpox. College students who have not had chickenpox should be vaccinated against this potentially serious disease.

Vaccination Recommendations for College Students

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College Health Association (ACHA) recommend that all college students without a history of chickenpox receive the vaccine.

Symptoms of the Disease

Chickenpox has a characteristic itchy rash, which then forms blisters that dry and scab in four to five days. The rash can be the first sign of illness, sometimes accompanied by fever and tiredness. An infected person can have skin lesions that can be few in number to more than 500. Complications that may require hospitalization increase with age. Adults are 10 times more likely than children to be hospitalized with severe consequences of chickenpox. These consequences include pneumonia and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

Transmission of the Disease

Chickenpox is highly contagious. About 90 percent of individuals who have not had chickenpox will get the disease if they are exposed to an infected person. The virus can be spread from person to person through the air or by contact with fluid from chickenpox blisters. The disease remains contagious from a day or two before the rash appears until all the blisters form scabs.

Incidence of Chickenpox

In the United States, chickenpox is very common. Virtually all individuals who have not been vaccinated contract chickenpox by adulthood. Approximately 90 percent of chickenpox cases occur in children 1 to 14 years of age, and most people will have had chickenpox by their early 20s. About four million Americans develop chickenpox each year. Nearly 11,000 have complications that require hospitalization, and about 100 people die. The highest incidence of chickenpox occurs between March and May.

Risk for College Students

Adults are more likely to die from chickenpox and its complications, which increase with age. Chickenpox can spread more easily in a college living environment, including dormitories, classrooms, libraries, and other close quarters where students spend a lot of time, which increases the likelihood for college students to contract the disease. Health sciences students (e.g., nursing and medical) are at particular risk of exposure and may transmit the disease to persons at high risk of complications; therefore, health sciences students should be vaccinated against varicella if susceptible.

The Chickenpox Vaccine

The chickenpox vaccine is safe and effective. The vaccine is approximately 80-90 percent effective in preventing disease. The most common side effect is soreness at the site of injection. People over age 13 require two doses at least one month apart. Most people who get vaccinated will not get chickenpox; and if they do get chickenpox, it's usually very mild.

Shingles

Some people who have had chickenpox may develop shingles later in life. Shingles, or herpes zoster, is caused by a reactivation of the same varicella virus that causes chickenpox. Shingles is a painful infection, which may include a blistering rash and severe burning pain, tingling, or extreme sensitivity to the skin. Symptoms last about a month. Approximately one in five people in the United States develops shingles. Studies are underway to determine if the chickenpox vaccine can help prevent or reduce the severity of shingles later in life.

For More Information

To learn more about chickenpox and the vaccine, please contact your physician or **[INSERT NAME OF COLLEGE HEALTH SERVICE, CAMPUS LOCATION, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND WEBSITE]** For general information about chickenpox among college students, visit the websites of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), www.cdc.gov/nip/diseases/varicella/, and the American College Health Association (ACHA), www.acha.org.

The American College Health Association

The American College Health Association (ACHA), founded in 1920, is a national nonprofit organization serving and representing the interests of professionals and students in health and higher education. Its mission is to be the principal advocate and leadership organization for college and university health. The association provides advocacy, education, and services or its members to enhance their ability to improve the health of all students and the campus community.