



**Direct Remedies**

'Keeping you safe by choice'

Contact: 0845 130 4595 or [jabs@directremedies.com](mailto:jabs@directremedies.com)

### **Hepatitis B Vaccination (Engerix B vaccine)**

#### **Hepatitis B: the disease.**

Hepatitis B is a serious viral disease. It is spread through contact with the blood and other body fluids of an infected person. A person can get infected in several ways, such as: by having unprotected sex with an infected person; by sharing needles when injecting illegal drugs; by being stuck with a used needle as an occupational hazard; and during pregnancy when the virus passes from an infected mother to her baby through the placenta.

Hepatitis B infection can cause an immediate illness that leads to loss of appetite; diarrhoea and vomiting; tiredness; jaundice (yellow skin or eyes); or muscle pain or stomach cramps. Rarely, it can cause liver failure. It can also cause long-term complications such as cirrhotic liver damage, liver cancer, and death

#### **The Vaccine.**

Engerix B is the brand of vaccine we use to prevent Hepatitis B.

Engerix-B exposes the individual to a small amount of the viral material. The body responds by developing immunity to the disease.

#### **Mercury.**

The vaccine does contain Thimerosal which is a mercury based preservative used as part of the manufacturing process. The potential risk from this substance is regarded as far less than the very serious risks from Hepatitis B.

#### **Who should be vaccinated?**

Vaccination with Engerix-B is recommended for all children younger than 18 years of age. And is part of the routine immunisation schedule in many developed countries.

Vaccination is also recommended for adults over 18 who are at risk due to sexual, drug misuse or occupational reasons. It is also recommended for household contacts of persons with chronic infectious Hepatitis B disease as well as hemodialysis patients

Engerix-B is very effective in preventing the disease, protecting large populations who would otherwise be at great risk.

#### **How is it given?**

The doctor or nurse will administer the Engerix-B as an injection into the muscle or under the skin, usually in the upper arm.

#### **The accelerated course for high risk:**

An infant whose mother is infected with HBV should receive the first dose of the vaccine within 12 hours of birth, a second dose at 1 month of age, a 3<sup>rd</sup> dose at 2 months of age, and a final dose at 12 months of age.

This type of course: 0, 1, 2 and 12 months is also recommended for people who are going to be resident in a high risk part of the world e.g. the Far East.

## **Normal course:**

An infant whose mother is not infected with Hepatitis B, should receive the first dose of the vaccine from birth to 2 months of age. Subsequently, 2 further doses are required: one about 6 to 8 weeks after the first dose. And a final jab 4 to 6 months after the first dose.

An older child, adolescent, or adult can receive the first dose of the vaccine any age, a second dose 1 to 2 months after the first dose, and a third dose 4-6 months after the first dose.

Please call to discuss your schedule if at all uncertain.

The vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines if necessary.

## What if a dose is missed?

Contact the doctor if a dose of Engerix-B is missed or if you get behind schedule. The next dose needs to be given as soon as possible. But there is usually no need to start all over again.

## Side Effects and risks.

The risk of Engerix-B causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small. However, the vaccine, like any other medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. Serious allergic reactions include swelling of the lips, tongue, or face; difficulty breathing; closing of the throat; hives; paleness; weakness; dizziness; or a fast heart beat. These are rare and can happen either soon after the jab or hours later in sensitive individuals.

Less serious side effects are: a high temperature (Fever) in about 1 to 5 % of recipients. Pain at the site of the injection which may sometimes lasts a day or two.

We recommend reducing fever and pain by taking a medicine such as calpol, brufen or paracetamol.

Side effects other than those listed here may also occur. Contact the doctor about any side effect that seems unusual or worrying.

## Other medications.

Do let the doctor know if you are on medicines that may affect the immune system e.g., steroids (like prednisolone), cancer treatment etc.

## Further clarifications and booking an appointment.

Please call 0845 130 4595 to clarify any further details. Your questions can be put to the doctor if they are clinical or technically complicated.

You may also call to book an appointment after registering with Direct Remedies Ltd.

Thank you.

Author: Dr D.D.Ratnasinghe.

Revised: January 2007