Hepatitis A Vaccine

What is hepatitis A?
- Hepatitis A is a serious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV).
- It is usually spread by close personal contact, and by eating or drinking food or water containing HAV.
- Symptoms can include loss of appetite, a mild ‘flu-like’ illness, severe abdominal pain and diarrhea, nausea, tiredness, fever and jaundice.
- About 25% of people with hepatitis A require hospitalization.
- 1 to 3 out of 1,000 infected people with hepatitis A will die.
- A person with hepatitis A can easily pass the disease to others within the same household.

What does Hepatitis A vaccine contain?
- Hepatitis A antigen.
  Avaxim® contains:
  - Aluminum hydroxide, 2-phenoxyethanol, formaldehyde, polysorbate 80, Medium 199 and neomycin.
  - Does not contain latex.

  Havrix® contains:
  - Formalin, aluminum hydroxide, amino acids, disodium phosphate, monopotassium phosphate, neomycin sulphate, polysorbate 20, potassium chloride, sodium chloride. It is propagated in MRC-5 human diploid cells. Does not contain latex.

  Vaqta® contains:
  - Amorphous aluminum hydroxyphosphate sulfate, sodium borate bovine albumin, sodium chloride, formaldehyde and a trace of neomycin.

- It is propagated in MRC-5 human diploid cells.
- Contains latex.

How effective is the vaccine?
- Greater than 90% are protected from disease 14 days after vaccination. 100% protected after 1 month.
- The vaccine will provide adequate protection even if given just prior to departure.

How long does the protection last?
- At least 20 years, if not for life after the second dose.

Who should receive the vaccine?
- Residents (1 - 15 years) of some rural or remote Canadian communities which lack adequate sanitation where a routine hepatitis A vaccination program has been implemented.
- All travellers (6 months of age or older) to developing countries (client must purchase).
- People for whom hepatitis A is an occupational hazard, e.g. sanitation and lab workers.
- Residents in certain institutions, such as correctional facilities and facilities for developmentally challenged persons.
- Men who have sex with men.
- Injection drug users (street drugs), their sexual partners and household contacts.
- People who have hepatitis C.
- People with bleeding disorders.
- Transplant recipients - bone marrow, solid organs, stem cell.
- People with HIV.
• Household or close contacts of someone diagnosed with hepatitis A infection.
• Chronic liver disease including cirrhosis.

Who should not receive the vaccine?
• Infants under 6 months of age.
• Anyone who has had a life-threatening allergic reaction to any of the vaccine components.
• Most vaccines can be safely given in pregnancy, but are usually deferred until after the pregnancy if not needed urgently. Consult with your physician.
• People with moderate to severe illness may have to delay immunization.

How is the vaccine given?
• By injection into a muscle (the deltoid muscle is the preferred site for injection).
• For infants 6-12 months of age, the outside medio-lateral thigh is the site of choice.

When should the vaccine be given?
• The initial dose is followed by a booster 6-18 months later.
• This vaccine can be given up to the day of departure for travellers.
• May be safely given with other vaccines.

What might be felt after receiving the vaccine?
Very Common ( > 10%)
• Headache, soreness/swelling at injection site, tiredness, muscle aches.
Common (between 1 and 10%)
• Redness/swelling near the injection site, headache, achiness, fatigue, fever, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, rash.
Uncommon (between 0.1% and 1%)
• Dizziness, upper respiratory infection
Rare (between 0.1% and 0.01%)
• Itching, numbness/tingling, severe allergic reaction, hives, convulsions.

If a severe or unusual reaction occurs, call your doctor, Provincial HealthLine at 1-877-800-0002, or 911 for treatment or advice. To report the reaction to Public Health, call one of the numbers below.

Individual immunization information is recorded in an electronic provincial immunization registry database. Recorded information may be used to:
• Manage immunization records
• Notify you if you or your child needs an immunization
• Monitor how well vaccines work in preventing vaccine preventable diseases.

Your immunization records may also be shared with health care professionals in order to provide public health services, assist with diagnosis and treatment; and to control the spread of vaccine preventable diseases.

For more information, call the International Travel Centre at (306) 655-4780
www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/internationaltravel