

## Q: What happened during the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Dec. 4-5 meeting?

A: ACIP voted to end the universal recommendation for hepatitis B vaccines for infants. The ACIP also voted to consider the use of blood tests to determine how many hepatitis B vaccines to give.

Oregon, through the West Coast Health Alliance, issued a statement affirming their support for the previous universal recommendation for hepatitis B vaccination for infants, with the first dose provided within 24 hours of birth—a recommendation that has reduced pediatric hepatitis B infections by 99 percent. You can read the statement [here](#).

## Q: Should I have my baby vaccinated against hepatitis B?

**A: Yes.** Oregon Health Authority and the West Coast Health Alliance support the long-standing recommendation for hepatitis B vaccination within 24 hours of birth, followed by completion of the full vaccine series—a recommendation grounded in science and decades of safety data and supported by trusted national medical organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Infectious Disease Society of America.

## Q: What has changed?

A: In Oregon, there will be no change to hepatitis B vaccine coverage. The vaccine will continue to be available to parents who choose protection for their infants.

## **Q: What is hepatitis B?**

A: Hepatitis B is a highly infectious virus that attacks the liver and can cause chronic liver disease, liver cancer, liver failure, and death.

## **Q: How long have pediatricians and medical associations recommended the hepatitis B vaccine for infants?**

A: The United States adopted universal infant hepatitis B vaccination in 1991 after other strategies failed to meaningfully reduce infections. Since then, pediatric hepatitis B infections in the United States have declined by 99%.

Hepatitis B vaccination is the safest and most effective way to prevent infection and its complications.

Trusted medical organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Infectious Diseases Society of America, support the existing hepatitis B vaccine protocol.

## **Q: Why do you recommend a dose at birth?**

A: A birth dose is critical because some infants exposed at or near delivery may not be identified through maternal screening alone. Infants may become infected by household members and caregivers—many of whom do not know they are infected with hepatitis B.

Universal vaccination of newborns within 24 hours of birth, followed by completion of the vaccination series, is essential to protecting infants and young children, who are at greatest risk from complications from hepatitis B.

Children can be exposed at birth or through normal household or childhood activities, and they face the highest risk for chronic infection and long-term complications.

Up to 25% of infected children die prematurely from hepatitis-related disease.

