Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Hepatitis B Vaccine (Recombinant

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

## Brand Names: US

Engerix-B; Recombivax HB

## Brand Names: Canada

Engerix-B; Recombivax HB

## What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent hepatitis B infection.

## What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have an infection or an illness with a fever.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and

health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

## What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

### For all patients taking this drug:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- If you have a latex allergy, talk with your doctor. Some products have latex.
- Like all vaccines, this vaccine may not fully protect all people who get it. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- This drug will not keep you from getting other types of hepatitis.
- This drug is a vaccine with a virus that is not active. It cannot cause the disease.
- If you have a weak immune system or take drugs that weaken the immune system, talk with your doctor. This vaccine may not work as well.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan on getting pregnant, or are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks to you and the baby.

### Children:

- If this drug is being given to your child after birth and your child was born weighing less than 2 kg (4.4 lb), talk with the doctor.
- If your child is an infant who was born premature, use this drug with care. There is a chance your child could rarely have more side effects.

## What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

**WARNING/CAUTION:** Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Severe dizziness or passing out.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Change in eyesight.
- High fever.

## What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

### For all patients taking this drug:

- Pain, redness, or swelling where the shot was given.
- Feeling dizzy, tired, or weak.
- Headache.
- Mild fever.

### Children:

- Feeling fussy.
- Diarrhea.
- Decreased appetite.
- Runny nose.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

Report side effects to the FDA/CDC Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) at https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

## How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- It is given as a shot into a muscle or under the skin.

## What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

## How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

## General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

## Additional Information

Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) are made by the staff of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Each VIS gives information to properly inform the adult receiving the vaccine or, in the case of a minor, the child’s parent or legal representative about the risks and benefits of each vaccine. Before a doctor vaccinates a child or an adult, the provider is required by the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act to give a copy of the VIS. You can also get foreign language versions.

https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/hep-b.html

## Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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