



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES



Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program

Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV can cause short-term (acute) illness that leads to loss of appetite, fatigue, diarrhea, vomiting, jaundice (yellow skin or eyes), and pain in muscles, joints and abdomen. HBV can also cause long-term (chronic) illness that may lead to liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer and death. HBV is spread through contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person. A person can become infected in several ways, including: having unprotected sex with an infected person; sharing needles when injecting illegal drugs or being stuck with a used needle on the job; or during birth when the virus passes from an infected mother to her baby. About 10% of all acute HBV infections progress to chronic infection. Those infected at a younger age have a higher risk of developing chronic infection. The risk is highest in infants who become infected; as many as 90% of them become chronically infected.

The primary objective of the NH Division of Public Health Services' Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program is the prevention of the transmission of hepatitis B virus from a hepatitis B-positive pregnant woman to her infant. The program goals are to:

- Promote screening of all pregnant women for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg);
- Ensure that all laboratories, hospitals and prenatal care providers are aware of the need to report HBsAg-positive test results to the NH DHHS (per RSA-141 C);
- Identify & track hepatitis B-positive pregnant women, their infants & household/sexual contacts;
- Ensure that all infants born to hepatitis B-positive mothers receive hepatitis B vaccine and hepatitis B immune globulin at birth, complete the 3-dose hepatitis B vaccine series and have post-vaccination blood testing done to show that they are protected;
- Ensure that household/sexual contacts of hepatitis B-positive pregnant women are identified, have a blood test if their hepatitis B status is unknown, and receive hepatitis B vaccine, if needed;
- Provide educational materials to hepatitis B-positive pregnant women; and
- Provide current recommendations & guidelines to prenatal & pediatric healthcare providers and hospital maternity nurse managers.

For additional information, contact:

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Resources:

CDC website, hepatitis page <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm>
Immunization Action Coalition's website, hepatitis B information <http://www.immunize.org/hepatitis-b/>