

## HEPATITIS B INFORMATION

### HEPATITIS B – THE FACTS

- Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by the Hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis B occurs worldwide.
- The virus is usually spread through blood, semen and vaginal fluid. The most common way to transmit Hepatitis B is from mother to child at birth. It can also be spread through sexual contact.
- Those infected at birth or in early infancy have a much greater chance of becoming carriers than those infected as older children or adults.
- People who remain infected are known as Hepatitis B carriers. An estimated 15-20% of Hepatitis B carriers may die prematurely of liver disease including liver cancer.
- Most people who catch Hepatitis B recover fully.

### UNIVERSAL HEPATITIS B VACCINATION

- The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends Hepatitis B vaccination for **all Australian infants**.
- The first vaccination will be offered in hospital shortly after birth and should not be delayed beyond 7 days after birth.
- Infants born to mothers with Hepatitis B will receive Hepatitis B immunoglobulin within 12 hours of birth and a dose of Hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth.
- All infants will then be offered three further doses from 2 months of age. This will not mean extra injections because combination vaccines will be used.
- The full course of Hepatitis B vaccine (4 doses) is recommended to provide long-term protection against Hepatitis B.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF HEPATITIS B VACCINE

REACTIONS	WHAT TO DO
<p><b>Most babies tolerate Hepatitis B vaccination very well.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>A small percentage (2 – 3%) develop a mild fever.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>A few develop mild soreness, redness, and swelling around the injection site.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Give extra fluids (eg more breast feeds or water).</b></li> <li>❖ <b>Do not overdress the baby if hot.</b></li> <li>❖ <b>A cold, wet cloth on the sore area at the injection site will help relieve some discomfort.</b></li> </ul>
<p>If you are concerned about a persistent temperature for more than 48 hours consult your medical practitioner.</p>	