

## News Release

### For Immediate Release

May 25, 2013

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## Hepatitis – Which immunization do I need?

**McCook** – Are you confused about which Hepatitis shot to get? Here are some helpful hints as you are making immunization decisions for Hepatitis. To begin, there are three types: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. All Hepatitis symptoms are similar. You may experience jaundice, fever, loss of appetite, fatigue, dark urine, joint pain, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting.

Very rarely, a recently acquired case of viral hepatitis can cause liver failure and death. People who have a chronic HBV infection have a much higher risk of liver failure and liver cancer. Chronic HCV-related liver disease is the leading cause for liver transplant.

Hepatitis A (HAV)	Hepatitis B (HBV)	Hepatitis C (HCV)
<b>How is it spread?</b>	<b>How is it spread?</b>	<b>How is it spread?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Found in the feces of people with hepatitis A.</li> <li>*Usually spread by close physical contact.</li> <li>*Spread by eating food or drinking water contaminated with HAV.</li> <li>*Traveling internationally where HAV infection is occurring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Found in blood &amp; certain body fluids.</li> <li>*Virus spread when blood or body fluid from an infected person enters the body of person who is not immune.</li> <li>*Exposure to infected blood in ANY situation can be a risk for transmission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Found in blood &amp; certain body fluids.</li> <li>*Virus spread when blood or body fluid from an HCV-infected person enters another person's body.</li> <li>*Typically spread through sharing needles, exposure to needlesticks on the job.</li> <li>*Infants born to infected moms</li> </ul>
<b>Who should be vaccinated?</b>	<b>Who should be vaccinated?</b>	<b>Who should be tested?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*All children at age 1 year (12-23 months) are typically vaccinated.</li> <li>*You should be vaccinated if you wish to be protected from HAV infection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*All infants, children and teens ages 0-18 years should be vaccinated.</li> <li>*Any adult who wants to be protected from HBV infection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*There is no vaccine to prevent HCV.</li> <li>*Testing recommended for people born: during 1945-1965, recipients of clotting factors made before 1987, hemodialysis patients and blood or organ transplants before 1992.</li> </ul>
<b>How is it prevented?</b>	<b>How is it prevented?</b>	<b>How is it prevented?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Get vaccinated! Safe &amp; effective vaccines to prevent HAV infection have been available in the US since 1995.</li> <li>*Always wash your hands with soap &amp; water after using the toilet, changing a diaper, and before preparing or eating food.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Get vaccinated! Hep B vaccination is the best protection.</li> <li>*Three shots are usually given over a period of six months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*There is no vaccine to prevent HCV infection.</li> </ul>

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department offers vaccines for Hepatitis A & B through various programs, including Vaccines for Children. This program provides immunizations to eligible children, 18 years old and younger. Eligibility is defined as those who are Medicaid eligible, uninsured, underinsured (health insurance does not provide coverage for childhood immunizations), and/or American Indian or Alaska Natives. Merck Patience Assistance Program also offers Hep A & B vaccines. Call for adult (age 19 & over) qualifications.

“If parents are planning to be in McCook, they can schedule their student shots Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:00 p.m. by calling 308-345-4223,” explains Melissa Propp, SWNPHD Public Health Nurse. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street, one block north of Arby’s.

Immunizations are one of the most effective and cost efficient ways to prevent disease. For every dollar spent on immunizations, it saves as much as \$29.00 in direct and indirect health costs. SWNPHD also provides adult immunizations and can bill Midlands Choice and Blue Cross Blue Shield insurance. We also bill Medicare for influenza and pneumonia.

More information on immunizations is available at [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) and you can follow us on Facebook or Twitter. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

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