



Grandparents Corner

May 2018

Hepatitis Awareness Month

Hepatitis B and the Vaccine to Prevent It

The best way to protect against Hepatitis B is by getting the Hepatitis B vaccine. Doctors recommend that all children get the vaccine.

Why should my child get the Hepatitis B shot?

- The Hepatitis B shot protects your child from Hepatitis B, a potentially serious disease.
- Protects other people from the disease because children with Hepatitis B usually do not have symptoms, but they may pass the disease to others without anyone knowing they were infected.
- Prevents your child from developing liver disease and cancer from Hepatitis B.
- Keeps your child from missing school or child care (and keeps you from missing work to care for your sick child).

Doctors recommend that your child have three doses of the Hepatitis B shot for best protection. Ask your doctor when your child should have the next shot. Typically, children receive one dose at each of the following ages: shortly after birth; one through two months; and six through 18 months. Your child may receive a fourth dose depending on the brand of vaccine the doctor uses.

Is the Hepatitis B shot safe?

The Hepatitis B vaccine is very safe and it is effective at preventing Hepatitis B. Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects, but serious side effects caused by the Hepatitis B vaccine are extremely rare.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis B?

Infants and young children usually show no symptoms; however, in about 7 out of 10 older children and adults, recent Hepatitis B infection causes the following: loss of appetite (not wanting to eat); fever; tiredness; pain in muscles, joints, and stomach; nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting; dark urine; and yellow skin and eyes.

How does Hepatitis B spread?

Hepatitis B virus spreads through blood or other body fluids that contain small amounts of blood from an infected person. People can spread the virus even when they have no symptoms.

Babies and children can get Hepatitis B in the following ways: at birth from their infected mother; being bitten by an infected person; by touching open cuts or sores of an infected person; through sharing toothbrushes or other personal items used by an infected person; from food that was chewed (for a baby) by an infected person.

The virus can live on objects for seven days or more. Even if you don't see any blood, there could be virus on an object.

Where can I learn more about the Hepatitis B vaccine and my child?

To learn more about the Hepatitis B vaccine, talk to your child's doctor, call 1-800-CDC-INFO, or visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents.

For more in-depth information about Hepatitis B, visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/vacchildren.htm

There is an increase in infectious diseases and a growing resistance to antibiotics. Therefore, effective cleaning techniques and basic health practices such as frequent hand washing are especially important. Germs can linger in the air after a person sneezes or coughs, others persist for days on various surfaces, while others contaminate your food. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. *It is not important to keep pets off kitchen counter tops and dining tables. T F*
2. *Use a leak-proof plastic bag, tied shut, for linen that contains body fluids or waste. T F*
3. *Hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. T F*
4. *Our bodies naturally carry germs on them. Most of these germs are harmless, and some are even essential to our health. T F*
5. *Hand sanitizer gels can be used to kill germs, but they should not always replace hand washing. T F*
6. *Proper hand washing requires rubbing both hands with soap and water to break down the grease and dirt that carry germs. T F*
7. *When cleaning, work from the cleanest to the dirtiest area and always wear gloves when giving personal care. T F*
8. *Never shake soiled linens because germs may contaminate the floor and be spread throughout the house on the soles of shoes. T F*
9. *As important as it is to properly wash your hands, it's equally important to dry them correctly, too. T F*
10. *Damp dish towels will not breed bacteria. T F*

KEY: 1. F 2. T 3. T 4. T 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. F