

## Vaccinations in the Workplace

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The most recent edition of the Canadian Immunization Guide recommends that all adults, including workers who may be exposed to infectious organisms in the workplace, receive the following vaccinations:

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Influenza for adults 65 or older, or those under 65 at risk of influenza-related complications and certain occupational groups
- Pneumococcal pneumonia for adults over 65 or those under 65 with conditions putting them at increased risk of pneumococcal disease
- Measles for all adults born in 1970 or later who are susceptible
- Rubella only for susceptible women of child-bearing age and health care workers
- Mumps only for adults born in 1970 or later with no history of mumps

#### Additional Vaccinations Recommended for Certain Occupational Groups:

Workers in certain occupations may be exposed to infectious hazards that they normally would not come in contact with in everyday life. The CIG recommends additional vaccination for certain occupational groups.

### HEPATITIS B

Workers can get Hepatitis B infections from exposure to infectious body fluids, notably blood, through:

- Eyes
- Mucous membranes
- Damaged skin
- Skin punctures
- Saliva is considered potentially infectious.

Full immunization involves three doses: an initial dose, a booster one month later and a final booster, one or more months after the first booster, depending on the vaccination used.

Up to 10% of the population may not respond properly to the vaccination, it is recommended that employers offer appropriate follow-up titre testing to workers receiving the Hepatitis B vaccination.

### HEPATITIS A

Currently the CIG does not recommend this vaccination for Health Care Workers.

## **INFLUENZA VACCINATION**

It is recommended that Health Care Providers and others who have significant contact with people identified as being at high risk of acquiring influenza, should be offered and receive annual vaccinations, unless they have medical reasons not to (CIG).

## **VARICELLA**

A live-virus vaccination is recommended for health care workers with frequent contact with children and who do not have a reliable, documented history of immunity to the virus.

## **BCG**

May be considered for health care workers at high risk of exposure to TB and/or multi-drug resistant TB, and where normal protective measures and control precautions against infection transmission are inadequate.

## **DIPHTHERIA, TETANUS**

The CIG recommends primary immunization (three doses) and an immunization booster in the last 10 years. When a worker receives a tetanus-prone wound at work, a booster may be needed.

## **POLIO**

The employer should encourage workers to determine if they were immunized as children. Workers who were immunized as children should be advised that vaccinations are available for adults.

## **SUMMARY**

Certain occupations are more likely to be exposed to infectious organisms or material at work. Employers need to be aware of vaccinations recommended by the CIG. There is an employer duty to inform workers about recommended vaccinations, arrange for workers to receive these vaccinations during normal working hours, and reimburse workers for the associated costs.

## **REFERENCES**

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, Guide to Vaccinations in the Workplace, 2004