



Provision of Hepatitis A and B Vaccine to Adults in Western Australia at Risk of Acquiring these Infections by Sexual Transmission and Injecting Drug Use

October 2019

Background

Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD), WA Department of Health, has been funding hepatitis A and B vaccination for people who are at increased risk of acquiring these infections by sexual transmission and/or injecting drug use and people newly notified to CDCD with hepatitis C since 1 September 2005. In keeping with the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#), this program now extends to people newly notified to CDCD with hepatitis B.

Risk groups

CDCD funds free hepatitis A and/or B vaccines for the following groups of people who are at increased risk of acquiring these infections by sexual transmission and/or injecting drug use:

- men who have sex with men
- people who inject drugs
- sex industry workers
- people living with HIV, chronic hepatitis B or C infection or chronic liver disease
- people newly notified with hepatitis C (newly acquired or chronic/unspecified) from 1 September 2005 or hepatitis B (newly acquired or chronic/unspecified) from 1 January 2019.

The Department of Justice funds hepatitis A and B vaccines for prisoners in corrective facilities; this group is not eligible for WA Department of Health funded vaccines.

Serological testing for immunity

In some circumstances, serological testing is recommended to identify people who may already be immune and therefore not require vaccination.

Serological testing for immunity to hepatitis B is recommended to identify and inform people with chronic hepatitis B infection for the purpose of on-going clinical management and to advise them of preventive measures for themselves and their household/sexual contacts.

Hepatitis A serological testing is not routinely recommended before administering hepatitis A vaccine. However, the following people should be tested:

- people born before 1950
- people who spent their early childhood in hepatitis A–endemic areas, including Aboriginal people from NT, Qld, SA and WA
- people with an unexplained previous episode of hepatitis or jaundice.

Providing funded hepatitis A and B vaccines

Public health units and authorised non-for-profit organisations

Public health units that provide clinical services, Next Step Drug and Alcohol Services and authorised non-for-profit organisations that have a high proportion of clients in the above risk groups may order WA Department of Health funded vaccines for the above risk groups.

Authorised non-for-profit organisations include Peer-Based Harm Reduction WA, the WA AIDS Council, HepatitisWA, Sexual Health Quarters, Fresh Start, Street Doctor and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

How to apply for authorisation to order and provide vaccines

Other not-for-profit organisations with a high proportion of clients in the above risk groups may apply to CDCD for authorisation to provide WA Department of Health funded hepatitis A and/or B vaccines. Applications should include written evidence of the organisation's not-for-profit status, demonstrate an appropriate structure for clinical and financial governance and be emailed to cdcd@health.wa.gov.au.

General practitioners

General practitioners who diagnose a new case of hepatitis C on or after 1 September 2005 or a new case of hepatitis B after 1 January 2019 may provide hepatitis A and/or B vaccination funded by the WA Department of Health. The provision of vaccine is facilitated by the local [public health unit](#). Which upon identification of new cases, sends the diagnosing practitioner a letter informing them how to order WA Department of Health funded vaccines.

General practitioners who diagnose a new case of HIV after 1 January 2019 may provide hepatitis A and/or B vaccination funded by the WA Department of Health. The provision of vaccine is facilitated by CDCD which upon identification of new cases, sends the diagnosing practitioner a letter informing them how to order WA Department of Health funded vaccines.

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