Introduction to DTP-Hepatitis B Vaccine

Ministry of Health
Department of Community Health
Mozambique

May 2001

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1 This document provides translations of health education booklets produced in Mozambique. The translations are being made available to help people in other countries develop their own DTP-Hepatitis B vaccine introduction materials. The translations were done by the Gates Children’s Vaccine Program at PATH.

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Information for Health Workers

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Information for Health Workers

In 2001 the Expanded Program for Vaccination is going to introduce a vaccine for Hepatitis B in Mozambique. This represents an important advance for public health because it is estimated that annually around 10 to 15 thousand Mozambicans die from this infection.

How can you help with the introduction of this vaccine?

1. Inform families about this new vaccine (DTP- Hepatitis B). Tell them of the benefits of the vaccine which gives them more protection with less effort.
2. Give clear answers in simple language in response to questions from the public.
3. Talk about the introduction of DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine.
4. Carry out meetings with community leaders to orient them to the introduction of this new vaccine and about how they can better support the vaccination program.
5. Check the health cards of children and mothers to see if any of them need vaccines or more doses of vaccines. Administer the vaccines as needed.
6. Treat the mothers or guardians with respect. Remember, in order to protect the health of Mozambican children, it is essential to have collaboration between health workers and mothers or guardians of the children.
7. Assure that each mother or guardian of the vaccinated child knows: 1) which vaccines the child received, 2) the possibility of side effects and what to do in the case of these effects, and 3) when the child should get the next dose or vaccination.
8. Remind families about monthly health days and the schedule of mobile brigades that give vaccinations.
9. Follow all of the instructions for storage and use of the vaccines. If you have questions, get information from the Vaccination Program Manual or from other health workers.
Questions and Answers about Hepatitis B

1. What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a serious disease of the liver that is caused by the Hepatitis B virus which is found in the blood and bodily fluids of an infected person.

2. How do you know if someone has Hepatitis B?

The Hepatitis B virus can result in acute disease after a person is infected, characterized by the following symptoms:

- Loss of appetite and discomfort
- Aches in muscles and joints
- Nausea and vomiting
- Jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)
- Dark urine
- Abdominal pain and fever

The majority of people infected have the illness for a long time without symptoms, anywhere from 5 to 50 years, until they develop:

- Liver Disease (called Cirrhosis)
- Liver Cancer

This disease can lead to death.

3. Why is Hepatitis B a health problem in the world and in Mozambique?

In the world, Hepatitis B infection is the largest cause of acute and chronic liver disease. Approximately 30% of the world’s population - almost 2 billion people - have been infected with Hepatitis B.

The majority of the serious consequences of infection with Hepatitis B occur in people who develop the chronic disease. At least one million of people infected with chronic Hepatitis B die annually from cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Mozambique is one of the countries with the highest rates of chronic Hepatitis B incidence: between 15 and 20% of adults have chronic Hepatitis B.

It is estimated that annually, 10 to 15 thousand Mozambicans - adults and children - die because of chronic Hepatitis B. It is one of the main causes of death from infectious diseases among adults.
4. Who is at most risk to get Hepatitis B?

Anyone can get Hepatitis B. Small children and adolescents run the highest risk. Children rarely develop acute illness after infection, but they run the highest risk of developing chronic Hepatitis B.

In Mozambique, it is estimated that:

- 5% of children under age 1 are infected,
- 12% are infected during their first two years of life,
- 15 – 30 % are infected between the ages of 3 and 9.

5. How is the Hepatitis B virus transmitted?

The Hepatitis B virus travels through blood and is considered highly infectious. It is transmitted via injections and from contact with blood and other fluids such as: semen, vaginal fluids, saliva, etc.

Hepatitis B virus can be transmitted:

- From child to child
- From mother to child during birth
- Through unsterilized injections and blood transfusions
- Through sexual contact

The mode of transmission most important in Mozambique is child to child.

6. Is there a cure for Hepatitis B?

There is no cure, so prevention is extremely important. Vaccination with DTP-Hepatitis B is the best protection against infection.

Questions and Answers about the Vaccine for Hepatitis B

7. How do you prevent Hepatitis B?

Immunization against Hepatitis B can prevent illnesses caused by Hepatitis B virus. The vaccine has a high protective efficacy rate, particularly in children. The vaccine for Hepatitis B is effective in the prevention of the infection when it is applied before or soon after exposure (within 7 days).

8. Who should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B, and when?

All children should be vaccinated against Hepatitis B in their first year of life. In Mozambique, as in the majority of developing countries, the majority of adults and older
children already are immune to Hepatitis B. Therefore, it is not necessary to vaccinate them.

9. How many doses are necessary to prevent Hepatitis B?

The vaccine for Hepatitis B is combined with the vaccine DTP. The vaccine has three doses and follows the same schedule as DTP:

- The first dose should be given after 2 months of age
- The second dose should be given at 3 months of age
- The third and final dose should be given at 4 months of age.

All of the doses should be given to guarantee long-term protection.

In the case that a child misses the date for vaccination, the following dose should be given as soon as possible. It isn’t necessary to start over with the vaccination schedule.

10. What children should get DTP-Hepatitis B vaccine?

- Children under 2 years of age that haven’t started DTP should receive the new DTP-Hepatitis B vaccine.

11. What children should not get DTP- Hepatitis B vaccine?

- Children that have started the DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine should complete the 3 doses of the same vaccine (DTP). Children under 2 who have received with the 3 doses of DTP should not receive the new vaccine.

12. How much DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine is administered and where on the body is it given?

Each dose of Hepatitis B vaccine (which is now DTP- Hepatitis B vaccine) is 0.5 ml. The vaccine is given in the same way as DTP (intramuscular) and in the same place on the body.

13. What are the side-effects of Hepatitis B vaccine?

DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine is very safe. The side effects that sometimes occur are pain or swelling where the injection was given (one in every 11 children). These symptoms can appear within 3 days after the injection and do not require any treatment.

It is rare for a child to have a fever after being vaccinated. Allergic reactions to the vaccine (rash, difficulty breathing and choking) is very rare (about one child in 600,000 vaccinated).

There is no risk of being infected with Hepatitis B from the vaccine
14. Are there any contraindications to giving the DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine to a child?

A child that has had a severe allergic reaction from the DTP – Hepatitis B should not get another dose. A fever is not a contraindication for vaccination.

15. How do you store the vaccine?

DTP – Hepatitis vaccine should be stored between 2 - 8 degrees Celsius. The vaccine can not be frozen. Once frozen, it loses its efficacy and must be destroyed.

16. What do you do with leftover vaccine in an open bottle?

DTP- Hepatitis B vaccine that is leftover in established vaccination facilities can be used in the very next vaccination session even if the bottle is opened. The vials opened in vaccination sessions by mobile brigades should be destroyed.

17. What supplies are necessary to administer DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine?

This vaccine, like vaccines for BCG and measles, is applied with a 0.5 ml syringe and a non-reusable needle.

Each syringe and needle used must be put in to a incinerator box. When the box is full, it should be incinerated.

Normally 100 syringes fit into a box.

The syringes and needles used should not be destroyed outside of the incinerator boxes in order to prevent the spread of disease.

18. What records are necessary for monitoring DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine?

It is important to monitor the use, waste and coverage of the vaccination. Printouts for the registration of this new vaccine will be provided, as well as the new “health card” for children that will allow space for this new vaccine and a better evaluation of the health status of the child.

Healthy Child, Happy Child

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Information for Community Leaders

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In 2001 the Expanded Program for Vaccination is going to introduce a vaccine for Hepatitis B in Mozambique. This represents an important advance for public health because it is estimated that annually around 10 to 15 thousand Mozambicans die from this infection. The success of introduction of this vaccine in your community depends on your collaboration.

How can you help with the introduction of this vaccine?

1. Inform families about the introduction of this new vaccine.
2. Explain to families the benefits of the vaccine which are: more protection without additional effort (because Hepatitis B vaccine is combined with DTP vaccine that children already receive in three doses).
3. Be sure that each family knows when their child needs to get the next dose of vaccine.
4. Motivate families to complete vaccination of the child during its first year of life. Remind mothers to check immunization cards for the date of the next vaccination.
5. Remind families of monthly health days and the schedule of mobile brigades that give vaccinations.

If you do all of this, you are taking care of the health of your community. Congratulations!
Questions and Answers about Hepatitis B

1. What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a serious disease of the liver. The majority of people are infected by Hepatitis B virus when they are still children. Some get sick when they are children, but the majority live without symptoms for many years. Later, when they are adults, they can get sick and even die from this disease.

2. How is Hepatitis B virus transmitted?

The virus passes from person to person in different ways. In Mozambique, the most common way is from child to child through saliva or blood of an infected child to other children through wounds or sores.

3. Does Hepatitis B affect many people in Mozambique?

Mozambique is one of the countries with the highest rates of Hepatitis B. Annually, 10 to 15 thousand Mozambicans – adults and children – die from chronic liver disease caused by this virus. Hepatitis B is one of the principle causes of death among Mozambican adults.

4. How can you prevent being infected by Hepatitis B virus?

The best prevention is the vaccination of small children under the age of 2 years.

Questions and Answers about the Hepatitis B Vaccine

1. Which children should get DTP-Hepatitis B vaccine?

In Mozambique, the Hepatitis B vaccine is combined with the DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) vaccine that all children should receive at 2, 3 and 4 months of age.

- All children under 2 years of age, that haven’t started with DTP should receive the new DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine.

2. Which children should not get the DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine?

- Children that started vaccination with DTP should complete the three doses with the same vaccine (DTP).

3. Does it cost anything to get the DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine?

No. DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine and other vaccines do not cost anything. These should all be given free of charge at all health centers and by mobile brigades.
4. Does getting Hepatitis B vaccine force mothers or guardians to bring their children to health centers more times to be vaccinated?

No. Children are going to get the same number of injections because the DTP vaccine is combined with Hepatitis B vaccine.

5. Does DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine create any health problems in children?

No. The DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine is safe and doesn’t create any problems that should cause concern. It is like a typical injection that may cause some pain in the area where then injection was given.

If you have any other concerns, don’t hesitate to contact health workers.

Remember:

- You can help your community have healthy children by getting them vaccinated in their first year of life.

- With DTP – Hepatitis B vaccine, children will get more protection with less effort!

**Healthy Child, Happy Child**