



# Hepatitis A (HA) - Havrix™, Avaxim®, Vaqta®

The hepatitis A vaccine protects against a liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus.

## Who should get this vaccine? <sup>1,3</sup>

- This vaccine is only available publicly funded (free) for those in the following high risk groups:
- Anyone with chronic liver disease (Hepatitis B, C).
- Those who use IV drugs.
- Men who have sex with men.
- People who have been exposed to the Hepatitis A virus through an outbreak.
- This vaccine may be recommended for others based on risk factors, however they would have to purchase it.

## How well does this vaccine work? <sup>1</sup>

- 90-97% of those fully vaccinated before exposure are protected from HA.
- Studies of HA outbreaks have shown that the use of vaccine in those at risk interrupts the outbreak. The protective efficacy of vaccine in one study when vaccine was used within one week of exposure was 79%.

## Is there an alternative to this vaccine?

At this time there are no other ways to prevent this disease. Practice good personal hygiene to reduce your risk: Wash your hands after using the bathroom or after changing an infant's diaper and before you prepare food and before you eat.

## Is this vaccine safe?

The risk of a serious reaction or side effect from this vaccine is much less than the risk of hepatitis A. If you experience any side effect worse than what is listed below, please seek medical advice and notify the health unit.

## Common side effects of this vaccine <sup>1</sup>

- Pain in the muscle
- Redness

## Less common:

- Headache
- Irritability
- Fever
- Feeling tired
- Feeling unwell
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

### Who should not receive this vaccine? <sup>1</sup>

- Anyone with an allergy to any of the vaccine components or who has had an allergic or anaphylactic reaction to this vaccine.
- Anyone under the age of 1 year (unless exposure to a confirmed case of Hepatitis A, then vaccine given to those 6 - 12 months).

### What is in this vaccine? <sup>2,3</sup>

Havrix™	Avaxim®	Vaqta®	Also found in...
Disodium phosphate			Pudding, Jell-O
Formaldehyde	Formaldehyde	Formaldehyde	Mushrooms, Pears, Apples
Monopotassium phosphate			Gatorade
Aluminum	Aluminum	Aluminum	Breast milk, infant formula
Polysorbate 20			Ice cream
Potassium chloride			Chocolate milk, Yogurt
Sodium chloride		Sodium chloride	Table salt
		Latex	Balloons
		Sodium borate	Water, soil
		Bovine albumin	Protein derived from cows
Neomycin	Neomycin	Neomycin	Antibiotics
	Polysorbate 80		Ice cream
	Medium 199 Hanks		Cell culture
	2-Phenoxyethanol		Cosmetics, toothpaste

### What else do I need to know?

It is important for you to keep a current record of your child's vaccines. When your child begins school you will be asked to provide a copy of this record to the school, who will forward it onto the health unit.

The health unit is required by law to keep immunization records for all children attending a day nursery or school. Health care providers do not share immunization records with the health unit. This is the parent's responsibility. You can share/update your child's record in the following ways:

- Use the secure on-line form on our website – [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/immsonline](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/immsonline)
- Fax a copy to 705-721-1495
- Mail a copy to:  
VPD Program, Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, 15 Sperling Drive, Barrie, ON, L4M 6K9.
- Call Your Health Connection at 705-721-7520.

### References

1. Canadian Immunization Guide. Part 4-Active Vaccines: Hepatitis A Vaccine. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada; 2015.
2. Canadian Immunization Guide. Part 1-Key Immunization Information 2013. Table 1: Types and contents of vaccines available for use in Canada. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada; 2015.
3. Moore, D. Your Child's Best Shot (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Canadian Paediatric Society, 2015.