

## What is the cycle of tragedy?

Pregnant women may unknowingly have hepatitis B virus (HBV) in their blood and pass it on to their infant at birth.

Up to 90% of these infected babies develop lifelong HBV infection and can pass the virus to others throughout their lives.

Approximately 25% of babies who develop lifelong HBV infection die prematurely of liver cancer or liver disease.

## Steps to stop the cycle of tragedy:

### 1) Prenatal patient

- Screen all pregnant women during prenatal care for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg). Report all HBsAg positive results to Los Angeles County (LAC) Public Health.
- At admission to delivery, screen pregnant women whose HBsAg status is unknown and women identified as being at risk for HBV infection during pregnancy.
- Transfer a copy of the pregnant woman's original HBsAg lab report to her delivery hospital medical record.
- Educate the HBsAg-positive pregnant woman and her household contacts (HHC) regarding hepatitis B and refer HHC for serologic screening and immunization if susceptible.
- Inform the pregnant woman of the importance of newborn hepatitis B vaccination.

### 2) Infants born to HBsAg-positive mothers

- Immunize baby with hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) and single antigen hepatitis B vaccine #1 **within 12 hours of baby's birth.**
- Document on the infant's medical record the maternal HBsAg test results and the infant's hepatitis B vaccine immunization.
- Report all births to HBsAg-positive mothers to the Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program (PHBPP).
- Complete hepatitis B vaccine series with 2<sup>nd</sup> dose at 1-2 months of age and 3<sup>rd</sup> dose at 6 months of age.\*
- Serologically screen infant for HBsAg and anti-HBs at 3-18 months after completion of the hepatitis B vaccine series.

### 3) Administer hepatitis B vaccine within 12 hours of birth to all infants born to mothers' with unknown HBsAg status.\*

### 4) Routinely administer the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine to all infants at birth.

This policy is a safety net that protects against perinatal HBV transmission due to avoidable mistakes such as misinterpretation of test results, ordering wrong tests, transcription errors, or overlooking positive test results.

\*For preterm infant schedule and other hep B vaccine schedule options see: CDC. A Comprehensive Immunization Strategy to Eliminate Transmission of Hepatitis B Virus Infection in the United States: No. RR-16 <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5416.pdf>

## What is Los Angeles County's Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program's role in stopping this cycle of tragedy?

California state law mandates that all pregnant women be seroscreened for HBsAg. Positive results **must** be reported by both the laboratory and the provider to LAC Department of Public Health. Providers report on a Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) form. Reports may be made by fax, mail, or telephone.

Phone: (213) 351-7400

Fax: (213) 351-2781

Mail: Los Angeles County  
Department of Public Health  
Immunization Program  
Perinatal Hepatitis B  
Prevention Program  
3530 Wilshire Blvd., # 700  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

## What happens to the report?

-When the CMR is received by the PHBPP, case managers provide health education in multiple languages to the mother about prevention of HBV transmission. The mother is sent literature in her preferred language.

-Household contacts are referred for evaluation and immunization if indicated.

-A letter and reporting form with current recommendations for hepatitis B immunoprophylaxis of the baby is sent to the delivery hospital. The infant must receive the hepatitis B vaccine #1 and hepatitis B immune globulin (HBIG) **within 12 hours of birth.**

-The delivery hospital reports the infant's birth and hepatitis B immunoprophylaxis to the PHBPP on the Hospital Report – Perinatal Hepatitis B form.

-The California Immunization Record (yellow card) should be filled out by the delivery hospital and given to the mother to bring to the infant's health care provider.

-The infant's parents and health care provider are contacted by PHBPP to verify the infant's vaccinations and to obtain post vaccination serology results.

## **If you have any questions?**

The PHBPP staff is available to assist you in ensuring that at-risk babies are protected against hepatitis B infection.

Bridget Beeman, RN, MPH  
Program Coordinator

My Ngoc Nguyen  
Health Program Coordinator

Los Angeles County-Public Health  
Immunization Program  
Perinatal Hepatitis B  
Prevention Program  
3530 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Phone: (213) 351-7400

Fax: (213) 351-2781

Website : [www.lapublichealth.org/ip](http://www.lapublichealth.org/ip)

Los Angeles County  
Department of Public Health

# **Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program**



**Health Care**

**Providers:**

**Together**

**We Can Stop the**

**Cycle of**

**Tragedy!**

