



# PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

POCKET GUIDE:

## HEPATITIS A VACCINE

### Important facts about hepatitis A<sup>1</sup>

- Hepatitis A is a contagious, short-term liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus. People who get hepatitis A may feel sick for a few weeks to several months, but usually recover completely and do not have lasting liver damage
- In rare cases, hepatitis A can cause liver failure and even death; this is more common in older people and in people with other serious health issues, such as chronic liver disease

If the patients meet any of the criteria listed in the section below, refer them to the pharmacist to discuss hepatitis A vaccination.

### Who should be vaccinated?

General Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)<sup>2</sup>:

- People who want protection from hepatitis A
- International travelers: Persons traveling to countries that have high or intermediate rates of hepatitis A should be vaccinated before traveling
- People with chronic liver disease: Patients with chronic liver disease are not at increased risk for hepatitis A virus infection; however, they are at increased risk for complications should they become infected, so it is recommended that appropriate patients receive hepatitis A vaccination
- People with HIV infection
- Users of injection and non-injection drugs
- People experiencing homelessness
- Men who have sex with men

Please refer to the CDC for complete hepatitis A vaccination recommendations.

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## Who should not be vaccinated? <sup>3</sup>

- Patients who have ever had a severe allergic reaction after a dose of hepatitis A vaccine, or who have a severe allergy to any part of the vaccine
- Patients who have a moderate or severe acute illness. Vaccination should be deferred until the person's condition has improved

Refer to the prescribing information for each vaccine product for full warnings and precautions.

**References:** **1.** Centers for Disease Control. Hepatitis A questions and answers for the public. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hav/afaq.htm>. Reviewed July 28, 2020. Accessed July 7, 2021. **2.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recommended Immunization Schedule for Adults Aged 19 Years or Older, United States, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-combined-schedule.pdf>. Accessed July 7, 2021. **3.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Epidemiology and prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases. Hamborsky J, Kroger A, Wolfe S, eds. 13th ed. Washington D.C. Public Health Foundation, 2015. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/index.html>. Reviewed April 15, 2019. Accessed July 7, 2021.



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