



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

ELIZABETH HERTEL
DIRECTOR

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CONTACT: Lynn Sutfin
517-241-2112
Sutfinl1@michigan.gov

MDHHS issues statement on hepatitis B vaccine

LANSING, Mich. – Vaccines play a critical role in the prevention and control of infectious diseases and have led to the eradication of several diseases and significant reductions in illnesses and fatalities. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services strongly disagrees with the decision made by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices today to delay the hepatitis B birth dose and [urges families and providers](#) to follow the immunization schedules from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and the [American Academy of Family Physicians](#).

Nearly 1.6 million people in the United States [are estimated](#) to be chronically infected with hepatitis B virus, with about half not realizing they have the virus. Infection can be transmitted through casual contact with blood or certain body fluids, including through contact sports, sharing of towels, toothbrushes or razors and contaminated medical equipment. The hepatitis B virus causes 22,000 infections and 2,000 deaths annually across the U.S.

Hepatitis B attacks the liver, and about 90% of infants infected at birth develop chronic hepatitis B infection, with 1 in 4 of these children dying prematurely from liver disease. Proven to be safe and effective in its use over the past 20 years, since the universal hepatitis B vaccination at birth was adopted in 2002, hepatitis B disease among children and adolescents has virtually been eliminated. [According to studies](#), delaying the birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine will lead to new infections and lifelong disease for tens of thousands of children.

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