



Preventing Perinatal Hepatitis B

Guidelines for Prenatal Care Providers

From the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Recommendations, December 2005*

TEST

- **California law requires that physicians test all pregnant women for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg)** before or at the time of delivery. HBsAg testing should be part of a standard prenatal panel used by all practitioners caring for pregnant women.
- **Laboratories** that provide HBsAg testing of pregnant women should use a test that is approved or licensed by the FDA and should follow the manufacturer's labeling. Repeat testing and confirmation of positive HBsAg results are required.
- **Test HBsAg-positive pregnant women for HBeAg** (hepatitis B e antigen), because HBeAg positive women are at increased risk of transmitting hepatitis B to their infants. HBeAg-positive pregnant women should be referred to a gastroenterologist for possible antiviral treatment during pregnancy.
- **Repeat HBsAg testing on HBsAg-negative women at the time of delivery if** the woman has clinical hepatitis or if she was at risk for hepatitis B exposure during pregnancy. Risk factors include recent intravenous drug use, an HBsAg-positive sex partner, more than one sex partner in the past 6 months, or treatment for a sexually transmitted disease [ACIP, American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG)].

REPORT

- **Report any pregnant woman with a positive HBsAg** result to the local health department. Screening pregnant women and reporting HBsAg-positive persons are legal requirements of the state of California (CA Code of Regulations, Section 125085).
- **Send a copy of the lab report** documenting the woman's HBsAg status to the birth hospital and to the health care provider who will care for the infant, if known.

VACCINATE

- **Vaccinate** pregnant women who are HBsAg-negative, have not been vaccinated, and are at risk for infection with hepatitis B virus.

REFER AND INFORM

- **Refer** HBsAg positive women to appropriate counseling and medical management.
- **Inform** the HBsAg positive woman that it is safe to begin breastfeeding after delivery. Administration of HBIG and the recommended hepatitis B vaccine series should eliminate any theoretical risk of transmission through breastfeeding.

Infants born to HBsAg-positive mothers should receive hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) and a dose of single-antigen hepatitis B vaccine within 12 hours of birth.

* A Comprehensive Immunization Strategy to Eliminate Transmission of Hepatitis B Virus Infection in the United States, Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Part 1: Immunization of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, MMWR, December 23, 2005 / 54(RR16);1-23 http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5416a1.htm?s_cid=rr5416a1_e