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Developed By: Medical Criteria Committee	

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Approved: Csaba Mera, MD Date: 01/09/09

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**Description:**

Pre-exposure immunization of susceptible persons with Hepatitis A & B vaccines is the most effective way to prevent hepatitis transmission. To reduce transmission of Hepatitis B and eventually to eliminate it, universal immunization is necessary. Vaccination against Hepatitis B has been recommended as part of routine early childhood immunizations since 1991. Accordingly, immunization of all children before or during adolescence is necessary and recommended. Additionally, immunization of adults belonging to identified high-risk groups is appropriate.

Hepatitis B vaccines are administered by intramuscular injection and induce immunity by stimulating the productions of neutralizing antibody to surface antigen (HbsAg). There are two recombinant vaccines that are available, Engerix- B (GlaxoSmithKline Biologics) and Recombivax HB (Merck). These vaccines prevent Hepatitis B and are most effective when administered in a three-dose schedule with different dosages for pediatric and adult patients.

There are two Hepatitis A vaccines available: Havrix (GlaxoSmithKline Biologics) and Vaqta (Merck). These are administered in a two-dose schedule with different dosages for pediatric and adult patients.

There is a combination vaccine: Twinrix (GlaxoSmithKline Biologics), which combines Havrix for Hepatitis A, and Engerix-B for Hepatitis B. It protects adults 18 years of age or older against diseases caused by Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B viruses, and is administered in a three-dose schedule.

**Criteria:**

- I. ODS will provide coverage for Hepatitis A and B vaccines when **one** of the following criteria is met:
  - A. All newborns, children and adolescents age 17 and under; or
  - B. Adults age 18 and older who may be at risk for exposure to Hepatitis virus due to one or more of the following:
    - i. Sexually active homosexual and bisexual persons
    - ii. Sexually active heterosexual persons with more than 1 partner in the past 6 months
    - iii. Household contacts and sexual partners of Hepatitis B virus carriers
    - iv. Patients who require dialysis
    - v. Patients with bleeding disorders who may receive clotting factor concentrates
    - vi. IV drug users and/or their sexual partners
    - vii. Patients who are immunocompromised
    - viii. Patients who have Hepatitis C
    - ix. Patients with chronic liver disease
    - x. Transplant candidates of any age
- II. ODS does not cover immunizations for travel or work. Therefore, while immunization may be recommended, Hepatitis A & B immunizations are not covered for members who are at risk due to:
  - A. Travelers to areas where Hepatitis A & B are endemic
  - B. Military personnel
  - C. Individuals with occupational risk of exposure, such as healthcare or childcare workers, or institutional workers, as well as primate animal handlers

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**Information to be Submitted with Pre-Authorization Request:**

- No preauthorization is required for children age 17 and under.
- For adults 18 years and older, physician charts notes documenting the high-risk medical necessity will need to be submitted

**References:**

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- National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC); Vaccinations for Hepatitis A and B; nih.gov; October 19, 2005.
- Recommended childhood and adolescent immunization schedule – United States, 2006. MMWR 2006. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov>
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- Mast EE, Margolis HS, Fiore AE, et al. 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, adolescents. MMWR Recomm Rep. 2005 Dec;54(RR-16):1-31.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Hepatitis B vaccination coverage among adults-United States, 2004. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2006 May 12;55(18):509-11.
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