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Hepatitis A vaccine shortage: implications and advice for clinical practice

Public Health England and NaTHNaC offer guidance for health professionals during the current hepatitis A vaccine shortage

Hepatitis A vaccine continues to be in short supply in the United Kingdom (UK) and globally; until normal vaccine supply resumes, some products may not be available or may be reserved for special risk groups. Thus, in these exceptional circumstances, it is necessary to consider options for hepatitis A vaccine dose sparing.

Following consultation with the [Joint Committee of Vaccination and Immunisation](#), Public Health England and NaTHNaC offer the following temporary guidance for health professionals in the UK:

- Hepatitis A vaccine use should be prioritised; an effective [risk assessment](#) will ensure vaccine recommendations are appropriate, help identify higher risk travellers.
 - For immunocompetent adults, and where adult monovalent vaccine is not available, a single priming dose of either paediatric monovalent hepatitis A vaccine or adult combination hepatitis A/B vaccine can be given (off-label)
- Non-immune HIV positive persons should preferentially receive standard adult antigen content monovalent HAV as a priming dose because of the poorer response rates to vaccine in this group.
- For adults primed with adult monovalent hepatitis A, a booster dose of either paediatric monovalent hepatitis A or adult combination hepatitis A/B vaccine can be given (off-label) where adult monovalent stock is not available.
 - For adults primed with adult monovalent hepatitis A vaccine, a booster dose can be delayed until beyond the recommended 12 months, to five years, in most circumstances.

Health professionals who are not independent prescribers must use a [Patient Specific Direction to supply or administer products off-label](#), in addition to following any local guidelines.

Health professionals are advised to follow recommendations as per the jurisdiction in which they practice. Further guidance will be published as information becomes available.

Resources

- [MHRA: Off-label or unlicensed use of medicines: prescribers' responsibilities](#)
- [Vaccine supply, shortages and use of unlicensed medicines](#)
- [Public Health England: Vaccine Update](#)
- [PHE Hepatitis A: pre-exposure immunisation recommendations](#)
- [PHE Hepatitis A infection: prevention and control guidance](#)