

**Pre-meeting document**

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# **Hepatitis B vaccination: safety issues**

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Viral Hepatitis Prevention Board meeting  
Geneva, March 13-14, 2003

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## **Hepatitis B vaccination: safety issues**

This document is meant as a short introduction to the literature concerning potential adverse events following hepatitis B vaccination and their impact, the subject of the Viral Hepatitis Prevention Board (VHPB) meeting in Geneva, March 13-14, 2003.

The objectives of the meeting include:

1. To review potential adverse events following hepatitis B vaccination.
2. To update the points of view regarding safety issues and describe new developments.
3. To describe the impact of safety issues in an international perspective.
4. To discuss communication strategies to counter vaccination 'scares'.

The following subjects will be treated and discussed in separate sessions:

- Adverse events following hepatitis B vaccination: multiple sclerosis; effects of thiomersal; effects of aluminium; leukaemia; and autoimmune diseases.
- Impact of safety issues and points of view from France, Germany, Scotland, Israel, and UNICEF, combined with considerations on the global impact and litigation issues.
- Communication: the Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS) and its communication strategy; the role of the industry; considerations on The Brighton Collaboration; countering the anti-vaccination movement and vaccination 'scares'; and working with the media.
- Conclusions and recommendations.

The conclusions resulting from the meeting will include amendments on points of view, guidelines, and existing recommendations issued by international organisations and institutes. In accordance with the VHPB tradition, the obtained information and points of view will be compiled and will appear in one of the next issues of *Viral Hepatitis*. A concise scientific report will be published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Relevant background information, suggestions for further reading, and additional sources of information are included in the reference list below.

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