

1 in 88 people in London have viral hepatitis  
Poor testing and vaccination results in 1.5 million worldwide deaths a year  
London has the poorest testing and vaccination record of any western Capital

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Dear General Practitioner or Practice Manager,

**Hepatitis B vaccination for 'At Risk' St John Ambulance Volunteers**

We are writing to offer guidance to general practitioners on vaccinating individuals who may be at risk of hepatitis B (HBV) infection as volunteers, not as employees, for non-profit and charitable organisations.

St John Ambulance volunteers who provide first aid, often as a first point of contact, may experience exposure to patients' blood. The St John Ambulance volunteers provide an invaluable, often life-saving service, free of charge to millions each year. However, the current arrangements for provision of HBV vaccination have left most volunteers unable to obtain HBV vaccination on the NHS.

Hepatitis B vaccination should be offered to all individuals deemed to be at clinical risk. This is set out in the Department of Health's 'Immunisation against Infectious Disease' (Green Book). In accordance with their primary medical services contracts, GPs are at liberty to vaccinate any individual against HBV if in their opinion there is a clinical need.

We attach a completed 'at risk' Control of substances hazardous to health or assessment form that we believe puts forward the case for providing these volunteers with the HBV vaccination free of charge. We recommend your practice vaccinate these individuals, if they request it, in line with this assessment as soon as possible. We would like to remind practices that under the terms of their primary medical services contract they cannot charge their patients for HBV vaccines unless the vaccine is administered in connection with travel abroad.

Yours sincerely

Paul Desmond, Executive Director, the Hepatitis B Foundation  
Sarah Matthews, Media Director, the British Liver Trust  
Charles Gore, President, the World Hepatitis Alliance

**PS. The above was written and worded for us all by the Office of Anne Milton Minister for Public Health in April 2011 to help speed these vaccinations.**