

Japanese Encephalitis Vaccine (Ixiaro*) Fact Sheet

The Japanese encephalitis vaccine helps to protect individuals 18 years of age and over against the Japanese encephalitis viral infection. It is given in a 2-dose series and you should have the first dose of the vaccine at least 5 weeks before you leave on your trip, for adequate protection.

What is Japanese encephalitis?

- Japanese encephalitis is a viral infection spread to humans by the bite of an infected *Culex* mosquito; they usually bite from sunset to sunrise.
- It is not spread by person to person contact.
- The mosquitos are found in Asia and parts of the western Pacific; they bite all year-round in tropical areas of Southeast Asia, e.g. Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, and usually just in the summer and fall in countries with four seasons, e.g. Japan, China and Korea.
- Japanese encephalitis occurs most frequently in rural and agricultural areas, especially where there is widespread irrigation for growing rice. The risk is low in the cities.
- Very few individuals have symptoms or get really sick, but if you do become ill, the symptoms will appear between 5 to 15 days after you become infected.
- In more severe cases, there can be swelling of the brain, known as encephalitis, resulting in the sudden onset of fever, headaches, vomiting, confusion, mental or behavioural changes, generalized weakness, paralysis, coma and seizures. It can be fatal.
- There is no treatment or cure for Japanese encephalitis virus.

Who should get the Japanese encephalitis vaccine?

- Individuals 18 years of age and older who are at high risk of catching the Japanese encephalitis virus due to travel to affected countries
 - during a season when mosquitos are usually present
 - spending one month or more in a rural or agricultural area
 - participating in outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, cycling or fieldwork, for a large amount of the time, especially if they take place during the evening or night time
- Laboratory workers who may be exposed to the Japanese encephalitis virus

What are the common side effects of Japanese encephalitis vaccine?

- Some people may feel sore and swollen for a few days where the needle was given and have general muscle aches, headaches and / or feel tired for a day or two.
- Tylenol® or ibuprofen may be taken afterwards, as directed, to reduce discomfort or fever.
- **Children under 19 years of age must not be given ASA, Aspirin® or salicylates.**

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Who should not get the Japanese encephalitis vaccine?

- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction to this vaccine in the past, or to any component of the vaccine:
 - **Ixiaro*** - inactivated Japanese encephalitis virus, Vero cells, protamine sulphate, aluminum hydroxide, no preservatives or antibiotics
- Anyone with a high fever or moderate to severe illness should wait until they feel well.
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women should only be vaccinated if it is clearly necessary.

What else do I need to know?

- If you are continually exposed to the Japanese encephalitis virus through your work or where you are living, you should receive a booster dose one year after immunization.
- If you are going to be travelling and exposed to the Japanese encephalitis virus again, a booster dose is recommended within one to two years after immunization.
- Protect yourself from mosquito bites, especially dusk to dawn, with insect repellent, permethrin-impregnated clothing, long pants or shirts and bed nets, and sleep in rooms with screens / air conditioning, if possible.
- Follow the advice on the Insect Precautions Fact Sheet.

When should I seek medical attention after immunization?

- If you experience any unusual side effects, seek medical attention and notify us.
- Go to Emergency at a hospital right away or call 911 if you have any of the following after immunization:
 - swelling of the face and neck
 - problems breathing
 - hives and itchy, reddened skin

Your Record of Protection

After you receive any immunization, make sure your health care provider updates your personal immunization record. Keep it in a safe place. Please inform us of any immunizations not received from public health.

Other Questions?

Talk to your health care provider or call our Immunization Program at 613-966-5500
Toll Free 1-800-267-2803 | TTY Dial 711 (1-800-267-6511) | www.hpepublichealth.ca

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