INFORMATION SHEET
HEPATITIS B VACCINE

**Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)**

Hepatitis B is a viral infection caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV) which causes death in only one or two percent of clients. Most people with Hepatitis B recover completely, but approximately five to ten percent of these become chronic carriers of the virus. Most of these people have no symptoms but can continue to transmit the disease to others. Some may develop chronic active Hepatitis and cirrhosis. HBV also appears to be a causative factor in the development of liver cancer. Thus, immunization against Hepatitis B can prevent acute Hepatitis and also reduce sickness and death from chronic active hepatitis, cirrhosis, and liver cancer.

**Hepatitis B Vaccine**

The Hepatitis B vaccine is a synthetic vaccine which, when administered, results in the seroconversion of approximately 95% of healthy adults. The vaccine is given by intermuscular injection into the deltoid muscle (upper arm). Following immunization, antibody levels decline, however protection against clinically significant HBV infection appears to continue even in persons with undetectable antibody levels. Pending further studies a booster shot may be recommended.

**Possible Side Effects**

No serious adverse reactions have been reported and the incidence of side effects is very low. There is no possibility of Hepatitis B infection from synthetic vaccine.

Side effects include soreness at the injection site, fever, headache, dizziness, fatigue, or nausea. All symptoms are infrequent and are limited to the first few days following vaccination.

**Precautions**

Pregnant women or nursing mothers should consult with their health care provider prior to signing consent for the vaccination. Individuals with well-documented allergic reactions to formalin (formaldehyde), thimerosal (mercury derivative), or yeast should consult with the Student Health Services physician prior to receiving the vaccine. It is not advised that you take the vaccine when you are sick, particularly with flu symptoms.

**Schedule for Vaccinations**

Vaccinations will be given by the Appalachian State University Health Services at designated times. You will be notified of these dates and times.

If you believe that you are already immune to Hepatitis B, you may request a lab test prior to receiving the vaccine.

The vaccine is given in three doses - the initial vaccination, one dose a month later, and the third dose six months after the first one. Lab work will be done after completion of the series to determine if immunity has been achieved. Failure to achieve immunity is infrequent, however, should this happen, an additional injection will be given.