



PACKAGE LEAFLET: INFORMATION FOR THE USER

AVAXIM®
Suspension for injection
in a pre-filled syringe

Hepatitis A vaccine (inactivated, adsorbed)

Read all of this leaflet carefully before you are vaccinated.

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- This vaccine has been prescribed for you. Do not pass it on to others.
- If you experience a side effect and it becomes serious, tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

In this leaflet:

1. What Avaxim is and what it is used for
2. Before Avaxim is given
3. How Avaxim is given
4. Possible side effects
5. How to store Avaxim
6. Further information

1. WHAT AVAXIM IS AND WHAT IT IS USED FOR

Avaxim is a vaccine. Vaccines are used to protect you against infectious diseases. This vaccine helps to protect against hepatitis A infection in people 16 years of age and older.

Hepatitis A infection is due to a virus that attacks the liver. It may be caught from food or drink that contains the virus. Symptoms include yellowing of the skin (jaundice) and feeling generally unwell.

When you are given an injection of Avaxim, your body's natural defences will produce protection against hepatitis A infection.

If you suffer from a bleeding disorder, you may be given the injection under the skin. The doctor or nurse must not inject the vaccine into the skin or into a blood vessel. Avaxim will not be given into your buttock.

4. POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Like all medicines and vaccines, Avaxim can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

Possible serious allergic reactions

Serious allergic reactions are always a very rare possibility after receiving a vaccine. These reactions may include:

- difficulty in breathing, blue discolouration of the tongue or lips,
- dizziness (low blood pressure) and collapse.
- swelling of the face and neck

If serious allergic reactions occur, they often do so very soon after the injection while still in the clinic or doctor's surgery. **If any of these symptoms occur after leaving the place where your injection was given, you must consult a doctor IMMEDIATELY.**

Very common reactions (reported by more than 1 in 10 people):

- mild pain at the injection site
- generally feeling weak (asthenia)

Common reactions (reported by less than 1 in 10 but more than 1 in a 100 people):

- headache
- feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea and/or stomach ache (abdominal pain)
- pain in the muscles and joints (myalgia, arthralgia)
- mild fever

Uncommon reactions (reported by less than 1 in a 100 but more than 1 in a 1000 people):

- redness (erythema) at the injection site

Rare reactions (reported by less than 1 in a 1000 but more than 1 in 10,000 people):

- a lump formed at the injection site (injection site nodule)
- mild and temporary changes in blood tests that measure how the liver is working (transaminases increased)

2. BEFORE AVAXIM IS GIVEN

Do not have this vaccine if you are:

- allergic (hypersensitive) to any ingredients of Avaxim (listed in Section 6) or to Avaxim
- allergic (hypersensitive) to neomycin, an antibiotic used during vaccine production, which may be present in the vaccine in small amounts
- ill with a high temperature, the vaccination will be delayed until you have recovered.

Take special care with this vaccine

Tell your doctor or nurse if you have:

- liver disease.
- a poor or weakened immune system due to:
 - corticosteroids, cytotoxic drugs, radiotherapy or other treatments that can weaken your immune system. Your doctor or nurse may wait until the treatment has finished.
 - HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection or any disease that weakens your immune system. It is recommended that you are given the vaccine, although it may not protect as well as it protects people with a normal immune system.
- phenylketonuria as this vaccine contains phenylalanine and may be harmful to you
- haemophilia or any other condition where you bruise or bleed more easily

This vaccine will not protect you against other viruses that attack the liver (such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C or hepatitis E viruses).

If you already have the hepatitis A virus when you are given Avaxim, the vaccination may not work properly.

The vaccine cannot cause the infection against which it protects.

As with any vaccine, not everyone who receives Avaxim will definitely be protected against hepatitis A infection.

Receiving other vaccines or medicines

This vaccine can be given at the same time as any of the following, providing they are given in different parts of the body (for example another arm or leg) and are not mixed in the same syringe:

- Typhoid polysaccharide vaccine
- Yellow fever vaccine
- Immunoglobulins (antibodies obtained from blood donors).

Very rare reactions (reported by less than 1 in 10,000 people):

- rashes that have sometimes been lumpy and itchy (including urticaria)

If any of the side effects gets serious, or if you notice any side effects not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

5. HOW TO STORE AVAXIM

Keep out of the reach and sight of children.

Do not use the vaccine after the expiry date which is stated on the carton and syringe label after EXP. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

The vaccine must not be used if there are unexpected particles in it. The vaccine must be stored in a refrigerator between 2°C and 8°C. Do not freeze. If frozen, discard the vaccine.

Do not dispose of vaccines via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to dispose of vaccines no longer required. These measures will help to protect the environment.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

What Avaxim contains

The active ingredient is:

- Hepatitis A virus GBM strain (inactivated)¹, 160 U
¹ produced in human diploid (MRC-5) cells
² adsorbed on aluminium hydroxide hydrated (0.3 milligram Al)

The other ingredients are:

- 2-phenoxyethanol
- formaldehyde
- Medium 199 Hanks (a mixture of amino acids including phenylalanine, mineral salts, vitamins and other components)
- water for injections
- hydrochloric acid and sodium hydroxide for pH adjustment

What Avaxim looks like and contents of the pack

The inactivated hepatitis A vaccine is a cloudy, white suspension. The vaccine is presented as a suspension for injection in a pre-filled syringe (0.5 ml of inactivated hepatitis A virus) with or without an attached needle (pack size of 1, 5, 10 or 20) or with 1 or 2 needles provided separately (pack size of 1 or 10). Not all pack sizes are marketed.

Avaxim may not work as well if it is given at the same time as immunoglobulins. However, it is likely that you will still be protected against hepatitis A infection.

Please tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you are taking or have recently taken any other medicines, including medicines obtained without a prescription.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding

If there is any chance you are pregnant or are breast-feeding, tell your doctor or nurse. They will decide whether to delay the vaccination.

Driving and using machines

This vaccine is unlikely to have any effect on your ability to drive or use machines. However no studies on this have been performed.

3. HOW AVAXIM IS GIVEN

The vaccine will be given by a doctor or nurse who has been trained in the use of vaccines and who is equipped to deal with any uncommon severe allergic reaction to the injection.

Dosage

Avaxim is given as an injection of half a millilitre of the vaccine to people 16 years of age and older.

You will be protected against hepatitis A about 14 days after you receive the first, single dose of Avaxim. This protection will last for up to 36 months.

If you need longer term protection against hepatitis A, you will need a second dose (booster) of an inactivated hepatitis A vaccine. This is usually given between 6 and 12 months after the first dose but can be given up to 36 months later. This booster will protect you against hepatitis A for at least 10 years.

Avaxim can be given as a booster if you received a different hepatitis A vaccine for your first dose (including vaccines that protect against hepatitis A and typhoid fever).

How the vaccine is administered

The doctor or nurse will shake the syringe immediately before use and check that the liquid is white and cloudy, and that there are no unexpected particles in it.

Avaxim should be injected into a muscle in the upper outer part of your arm.

Marketing Authorisation Holder

The Marketing Authorisation Holder:

In the UK is:

Sanofi Pasteur MSD Limited,
Mallards Reach,
Bridge Avenue,
Maidenhead,
Berkshire
SL6 1QP

in Ireland is:

Sanofi Pasteur MSD Limited,
and Block A, Second Floor,
Cookstown Court
Old Belgard Road,
Tallaght,
Dublin 24

Manufacturer

The manufacturer responsible for batch release is Sanofi Pasteur S.A. at one of the following manufacturing sites:

Sanofi Pasteur S.A., Sanofi Pasteur S.A.,
Campus Mérieux, or Parc Industriel D'Incarville,
1541 avenue Marcel Mérieux, 27100 Val de Reuil,
69280 Marcy l'Etoile, France
France

This medicinal product is authorised in the Member States of the EEA under the following names:

AVAXIM - Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom.

This leaflet was last approved in 03/2009