

# NDA calls for repeat of hepatitis B vaccine

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If you took a hepatitis B vaccine this year, you have reasons to worry. The National Drug Authority (NDA) yesterday urged the public to be vaccinated again, saying the vaccines they received could be fake.

NDA said between January and February, counterfeit vaccines from Serum Institute of India were recovered at several private health facilities. All the samples recovered from Mbarara showed inconsistencies.

Health specialists fear that if the con artists continue distributing fake vaccines, many people could die and the disease would spread.

"We are calling on all those who got vaccines between January and this month to get vaccinated again from Government facilities or the private facilities which were

cleared," Frederick Ssekyana, the NDA spokesperson, said.

Yesterday, NDA cleared only four private facilities to vaccinate. These are: Case Hospital, International Hospital Kampala, Norvik Hospital and Nakasero Hospital.

## MPs halt vaccination

The parliamentary committee on health has directed all private health facilities to suspend vaccination of hepatitis B, pending investigations into fake vaccines on the market.

"Vaccination of hepatitis B by all private hospitals is henceforth suspended. Only approved private hospitals should be allowed to administer vaccination of hepatitis B," Michael Bukenya, the committee chairperson, said.

The committee, which was yesterday interacting with the NDA officials over a petition on the regulation of pharmacies in Uganda, expressed concern that

the continued vaccination of unsuspecting Ugandans with fake vaccines posed a great health risk.

During the meeting, Medard Bitekeyerezo, the chairperson of the NDA board, said some suspects had since been arrested. He did not disclose the number nor the identities of the suspects.

According to NDA, three weeks ago, the authority was tipped off that unscrupulous people had been selling 10mls of hepatitis B vaccines, an imitation of the ones, administered by the public health facilities across the country.

"We got information that some people had made fake 10mls hepatitis B vaccine labels, purportedly from the Serum Institute of India, which supplies the vaccine to the Government," Bukenya said.

The source of the counterfeit hepatitis B vaccines remains unknown, according to NDA.

The 10ml vial labelled NOT FOR SALE is exclusively in Government hospitals. Private facilities are supposed to have 1ml ampoule, which has two green bands on the label. The genuine 10ml vial of hepatitis B vaccine from Serum Institute of India should at least have:

- Batch number
- The manufacture and expiry date with a shelf-life of three years
- Two purple bands on the label, one on the top and the other at the bottom.

**GENUINE  
VACCINE**

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