

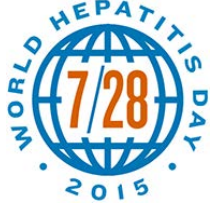


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Know More Hepatitis



July 28 is World Hepatitis Day. It is one of only four World Health Organization (WHO) disease-specific days, and is intended to raise awareness of viral hepatitis and the diseases it causes. World Hepatitis Day provides an opportunity to learn about the various kinds of hepatitis, how they are transmitted, and how they may be prevented.

Viral hepatitis is inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis A, B, C, D, or E viruses. The most common types in the United States are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.

- **Hepatitis A** (HAV) is typically caused by drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated food. People with Hepatitis A usually improve without treatment.
- **Hepatitis B** (HBV) occurs as a result of sexual contact or any contact with infected blood or body fluids. Hepatitis B can lead to serious liver problems if left untreated.
- **Hepatitis C** (HCV) is spread through contact with infected blood found in contaminated needles, razors, tattoos and body piercing tools. Hepatitis C can be acute or chronic.

Symptoms of all viral hepatitis are similar and include: yellowing of the skin, fatigue, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting. However, most people with Hepatitis C and many with Hepatitis B do not have any symptoms. While Hepatitis A, does not cause a long-term infection, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C can become chronic, life-long infections that can lead to serious liver problems including liver cancer. More than 4 million Americans are living with chronic Hepatitis B or chronic Hepatitis C in the United States, but most do not know they are infected.

DO YOU KNOW? *CDC recommends that everyone born in the years 1945 – 1965 get a blood test for Hepatitis C. People born from 1945-1965 are five times more likely to be infected with Hepatitis C and account for more than three out of every four Americans living with the disease. Many don't know they are infected.*

Prevention: While Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B can be prevented through **immunization**, there is no vaccine for Hepatitis C. The risk of infection for Hepatitis B or C can be reduced by avoiding:

- unnecessary and unsafe injections;
- unsafe blood products;
- unsafe sharps waste collection and disposal;
- use of illicit drugs and sharing of injection equipment;
- unprotected sex with HCV-infected persons;
- sharing of sharp personal items that may be contaminated with infected blood; and
- tattoos, piercings and acupuncture performed with contaminated equipment.

Get Tested: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that anyone at risk for chronic hepatitis be tested. If you have participated in any of the activities listed above, you are at risk. People born from 1945-1965 are five times more likely to be infected with Hepatitis C and account for more than three out of every four Americans living with the disease. If you were born from 1945 - 1965, you are at risk for Hepatitis C. In the U.S., Hepatitis B disproportionately affects Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. If you or your parents were born in Asia or the Pacific Island, you are at risk for Hepatitis B.

The CDC's online **Hepatitis Risk Assessment** takes less than five minutes and provides personalized viral hepatitis testing and vaccination recommendations.

www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/riskassessment/index.htm

If you think you may be at risk from either Hepatitis B or C, it is important to contact your health care provider for testing. If it is determined that you do have hepatitis, your health care provider can offer you counseling on options for treatment and regular monitoring for early diagnosis of chronic liver disease. To find out more about hepatitis, visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm.