



May is **Hepatitis** Awareness Month

Talk to your Doctor - Get Tested - Get Vaccinated

A recent Institute of Medicine report estimated that nearly 5.3 people are living with chronic hepatitis B or C in the United States. Most people do not even know that they are infected. Chronic hepatitis can lead to chronic liver disease and liver cancer. Approximately 15,000 people die each year due to liver cancer or other liver disease related to chronic hepatitis B and C.

What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, which is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood and fights infections. Hepatitis can be caused by increased alcohol use, toxins, some medications, and certain medical conditions; however, most often, it is caused by a virus. Hepatitis A, B, and C are the most common viral hepatitis infections in the United States.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is spread through fecal-oral contact, usually from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated with the feces or stool of an infected person. Anyone can get hepatitis A, but people at the greatest risk are those that travel to countries where hepatitis A is common and those that have sexual contact with or are household members of a person infected with hepatitis A. ***There is a vaccination available to prevent hepatitis A.***

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is spread through blood, semen, or other body fluids from an infected person entering the body of a non-infected, unvaccinated person. Risk factors include sexual contact or sharing needles, syringes or other drug 'works' with someone infected with hepatitis B as well as sharing personal items such as razors or glucose monitors with an infected person. Hepatitis B can also be spread from an infected mother to her baby during birth. Hepatitis B can be an acute (new) infection, which occurs within 6 months of exposure. However, acute hepatitis B may lead to chronic hepatitis B infection in many people, in which case the person will remain infected. ***There is a vaccination available to prevent hepatitis B.***

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is spread through the blood of an infected person entering the body of a non-infected person. Risk factors include sharing needles, syringes or other drug 'works' with someone infected with hepatitis C. Other risk factors include coming in contact with an infected person's blood by sharing personal items, such as razors, toothbrushes, or glucose monitors, as well as by getting tattoos or piercings at an unlicensed facility. Hepatitis C is less commonly spread through sexual contact. About 20% of people infected with hepatitis C will recover from the infection; however, for the majority, acute hepatitis C will lead to chronic hepatitis C infection. ***There is no vaccination to prevent hepatitis C.***

***If you think you may be at risk for Hepatitis A, B, or C,
contact your doctor or visit the health department to talk about testing and vaccinations.***

What can you do for Hepatitis Awareness Month?

- ✂ Set up an awareness table at your organization through the month of May or on May 19th, which is World Hepatitis Day.
- ✂ Place viral hepatitis posters or brochures throughout your organization to promote viral hepatitis vaccination and screening.
- ✂ Have information on hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccinations as well as hepatitis C screening available for clients/patients.
- ✂ Distribute hepatitis education materials to other organizations that you may work with.
- ✂ Host a viral hepatitis screening day at your organization or partner with another organization(s).
- ✂ Provide viral hepatitis education materials to your staff.
- ✂ Invite a speaker knowledgeable in viral hepatitis to come speak to staff and/or clients/patients at your organization. Or have someone living with or affected by hepatitis come to speak.

For questions/comments or to order viral hepatitis posters or educational materials, call 404-463-0849 or email apgandhi@dhr.state.ga.us.

Where can you get more information?

Useful Websites

- 🧡 Georgia Division of Public Health
<http://health.state.ga.us/epi/disease/hepatitis/>
- 🧡 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Viral Hepatitis
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/>
- 🧡 Hepatitis and Liver Cancer: A National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis B and C
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/PDFs/IOM-HepatitisAndLiverCancerReport.pdf>
- 🧡 Training and education for health professionals
<http://www.knowhepatitis.org/>
- 🧡 Where to get vaccinations
<http://www.travelsafely.com/>
- 🧡 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Downloadable Publications
<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/pubs/hepa.aspx#IHP>
- 🧡 Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA)
Care and Treatment for Hepatitis C and HIV Co-infection
<http://hab.hrsa.gov/tools/coinfection/coinfection.html>
- 🧡 Office of Minority Health
National Hepatitis B Initiative for Asians and Pacific Islanders
<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlid=190>
- 🧡 HBV Advocate
<http://www.hbvadvocate.org/>
- 🧡 HCV Advocate
<http://www.hcvadvocate.org/>
- 🧡 Other useful websites
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Resources/HelpfulLinks.htm>

Other questions? Call 404-463-0849 or email apgandhi@dhr.state.ga.us.