



Indiana
Department
of
Health

Viral Hepatitis Newsletter

May 2023

Spotlight



Hepatitis Awareness Month

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month, this means that across the country, federal and state agencies along with local partners will collaborate to provide awareness and education to the public on hepatitis-related matters.

This month's newsletter focuses on understanding what viral hepatitis is, who it effects, and will help you debunk myths with facts about viral hepatitis.

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Update to Hepatitis B Screening Recommendations

The CDC is recommending hepatitis B screening for all adults 18 years and older, a triple panel test should be requested at least once in their lifetime. In addition to the once in a lifetime test for anyone over 18, screening should also be done for anyone who is requesting hepatitis B testing, regardless of risk factors. New recommendations also include expanded periodic risk-based testing and screening pregnant people during each pregnancy.

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Viral Hepatitis Facts

What is Viral Hepatitis?

Hepatitis describes inflammation of the liver. The body needs the liver to filter blood, process nutrients and fight infections.

Viral hepatitis is inflammation of the liver due to a group of infectious diseases called hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E. Hepatitis can cause serious health problems.

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50% of people living with hepatitis

Do not know they have it, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

How Many People Are Affected by Hepatitis?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) globally hepatitis B and C are estimated to effect around 354 million people. In the United States, hepatitis B and hepatitis C are the most common forms of viral hepatitis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that there were 14,000 new infections of hepatitis B in 2020, and 66,700 estimated new infections for hepatitis C.

This results in an estimated 880,000 people living with chronic hepatitis B and 2.2 million adults living with hepatitis C.

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What Can We Do?

To work toward eliminating viral hepatitis we need to raise awareness about the epidemic of hepatitis, get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B, along with getting tested and practicing harm reduction techniques for viral hepatitis.

The CDC recommends that all infants, children and adults 59 and younger get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B, and individuals 60 and over get vaccinated if they present with risk factors for hepatitis.

Recommendations made by the CDC for testing include testing of hepatitis B and C for all adults at least once in their lifetime, and during every pregnancy.

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Viral Hepatitis: Myth vs. Fact

Myth: Hepatitis is rare.

Fact: Approximately 354 million people have hepatitis B, C, or both.

Myth: We don't need our liver.

Fact: The liver is an essential organ that performs more than 500 vital functions.

Myth: There is nothing you can do to prevent hepatitis A or B.

Fact: Vaccination is the best protection against hepatitis A and B.

Myth: There is no cure for Hepatitis C.

Fact: Approximately 90% of people can be cured of hepatitis C with 8-24 weeks of treatment.

Myth: You will know when you have hepatitis.

Fact: The only way to know is through testing. Hepatitis does not always cause symptoms.

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To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

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