

HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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World Hepatitis Day, July 28

Viral hepatitis is one of the leading causes of death globally, accounting for 1.34 million deaths per year – that's as many as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria. Together, hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C cause 80% of liver cancer cases in the world.

Viral hepatitis is not found in one location nor amongst one set of people; it is a truly global epidemic that can affect millions of people without them even being aware. Currently, 90% of people living with hepatitis B and 80% living with hepatitis C are not aware of their status. This can result in the real possibility of developing fatal liver disease at some point in their lives and in some cases, unknowingly transmitting the infection to others.

With the availability of effective vaccines and treatments for hepatitis B and a cure for hepatitis C, the elimination of viral hepatitis is achievable, but greater awareness and understanding of the disease and the risks is a must, as is access to cheaper diagnostics and treatment.

HEPATITIS B

Transmission: Hepatitis B is transmitted through contact with the blood or other body fluids (i.e. saliva, semen and vaginal fluid) of an infected person. It can be passed on from mother to child during childbirth.

Prevention: There is a vaccination that can prevent infection. If you haven't been vaccinated, to reduce chances of exposure it is best to use condoms, and to avoid sharing needles or items such as toothbrushes, razors or nail scissors with an infected person. It is also wise to avoid getting tattoos or piercings from unlicensed facilities.

Treatment: Drugs such as alpha interferon and peginterferon and a variety of antiviral drugs slow the replication of the virus and occasionally result in its clearance. Children born to mothers infected with hepatitis B should also be vaccinated within 12 hours of birth, as this can prevent an infection that will most likely progress to chronic hepatitis B.

HEPATITIS C

Transmission: Hepatitis C is mainly spread through blood-to-blood contact. In rare cases it can be transmitted through certain sexual practices and during childbirth.

Prevention: There is no vaccination for hepatitis C. It is therefore necessary to reduce risk of exposure, by avoiding sharing needles and other items such as toothbrushes, razors or nail scissors with an infected person. It is also wise to avoid getting tattoos or body piercings from unlicensed facilities.

Treatment: Treatment for chronic hepatitis C aims to eradicate the virus. It often involves a combination of pegylated interferon and ribavirin, and there is increasing use of potent direct acting antiviral drugs, with and without interferon. People with different genotypes respond differently to treatment, some more successfully than others.

Recommendations from the CDC:

1. Have you ever been diagnosed with a clotting factor disorder? Yes? Talk to your doctor about a **vaccination for Hepatitis A.**
2. Have you ever been diagnosed with a chronic liver disease? Yes? Talk to your doctor about a **vaccination for Hepatitis A & B.**
3. Were you or at least one parent born outside of the United States? Yes? Talk to your doctor about a **vaccination for Hepatitis B.**
4. Do you currently or have you previously lived with someone who is diagnosed with Hepatitis B? Yes? Talk to your doctor about a **vaccination for Hepatitis B.**
5. Have you recently been diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease (STD)? Yes? Talk to your doctor about a **vaccination for Hepatitis B.**
6. Have you been diagnosed with diabetes? Yes? Talk to your doctor about a **vaccination for Hepatitis B.**
7. Have you been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS? Yes? Talk to your doctor about a **vaccination for Hepatitis B** and **blood tests for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.**
8. Were you born from 1945-1965? Yes? Talk to a doctor about getting a **blood test for Hepatitis C.**
9. Have you ever received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992? Yes? Talk to a doctor about getting a **blood test for Hepatitis C.**
10. Have you ever injected drugs, even if just once? Yes? Talk to a doctor about getting a **blood test for Hepatitis C.**



Get Tested Early. Stay Healthy Longer



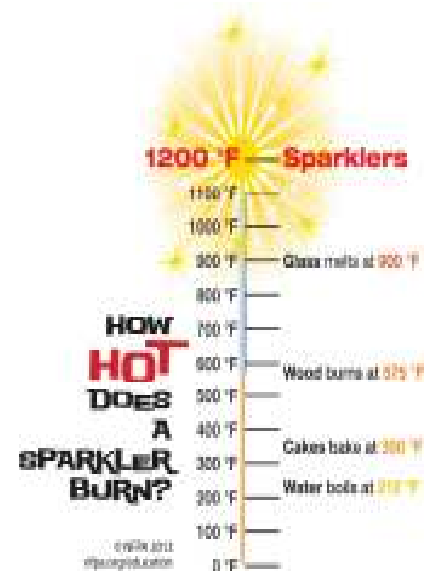
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Recommended Safety Tips from the National Council on Fireworks Safety

- Obey all local laws regarding the use of fireworks.
- Know your fireworks; read the cautionary labels and performance descriptions before igniting.
- A responsible adult SHOULD supervise all firework activities. Never give fireworks to children.
- Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Save your alcohol for after the show.
- Wear safety glasses when shooting fireworks.
- Light one firework at a time and then quickly move away.
- Use fireworks OUTDOORS in a clear area; away from buildings and vehicles.
- Never relight a “dud” firework. Wait 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.
- Always have a bucket of water and charged water hose nearby.
- Never carry fireworks in your POCKET or shoot them into METAL or GLASS containers.
- Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.
- Dispose of spent fireworks by wetting them down and place in a metal trash can away from any building or combustible materials until the next day.
- FAA regulations PROHIBIT the possession and transportation of fireworks in your checked baggage or carry-on luggage.
- Report illegal explosives, like M-80s and quarter sticks, to the fire or police department.



And let's not forget the safety of our pets!

- Don't bring your pets to a fireworks display, even a small one.
- If fireworks are being used near your home, put your pet in a safe, interior room to avoid exposure to the sound.
- Make sure your pet has an identification tag, in case it runs off during a fireworks display.
- Never shoot fireworks of any kind (consumer fireworks, sparklers, fountains, etc.) near pets.



Fireworks Safety = Fireworks Fun!!

