

July 28 - World Hepatitis Day

Introduction

Every year on July 28, World Hepatitis Day is celebrated under the auspices of the World Health Organization. The date was chosen for a reason: it is the birthday of Nobel Prize winner Professor Baruch Blumberg , who discovered the hepatitis B virus and developed the first vaccine against it. The 2026 campaign theme, "Hepatitis: Let's Get It Right," calls for collective action to remove barriers to eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

Relevance of the problem. Viral hepatitis is a group of infectious diseases that affect the liver and can lead to cirrhosis and primary liver cancer. According to the WHO, chronic viral hepatitis B and C affect over 350 million people worldwide, and over 1.3 million die annually from related complications. Particularly alarming is the fact that most infected people are unaware of their condition: hepatitis remains latent for a long time and is only detected when severe liver damage has already occurred. Therefore, pathological diagnostics and laboratory screening play a key role in early detection.

The purpose of this article is to raise public awareness of the causes, symptoms, risk factors, and modern preventive measures for viral hepatitis, as well as to foster a responsible attitude toward one's own health.

Main part

Symptoms of viral hepatitis

The clinical picture depends on the pathogen and the form of the disease. The most characteristic symptoms include: general weakness and fatigue; loss of appetite, nausea, and sometimes vomiting; heaviness and pain in the right hypochondrium; dark urine and discolored stool; yellowing of the skin and sclera (jaundice); itching; fever; and joint and muscle pain. Hepatitis B and C often occur without obvious symptoms, making regular laboratory testing essential for individuals at risk.

Risk factors

Viral hepatitis infections occur in various ways. Hepatitis A and E are transmitted primarily through the fecal-oral route—through contaminated water, food, and dirty hands. Hepatitis B , C , and D are transmitted through blood and other bodily fluids during medical and cosmetic procedures using non-sterile instruments, through injection drug use, through unprotected sex, and from an infected mother to her child during pregnancy and childbirth.

Type hepatitis	Path transmissions	Prevention
A	Water , food , dirty hands	Hygiene , vaccination
B	Blood, sexual, from mother to child	Vaccination , barrier contraception

C	Blood , less often sexual	Sterility , screening blood
D	Only if you have hepatitis B	Vaccination against hepatitis B
E	Water , food	Hygiene , clean water

Prevention

Viral hepatitis prevention includes specific and non-specific measures. Specific measures include vaccination against hepatitis A and B , which is included in the National Immunization Schedule. Vaccination against hepatitis B also protects against hepatitis D. There is currently no effective vaccine against hepatitis C , but modern direct-acting antiviral drugs can cure over 95% of patients.

Non-specific prevention includes: maintaining personal hygiene and drinking only safe water and food; using personal hygiene items (razors, manicure tools, toothbrushes); visiting only trusted medical, dental, and cosmetology facilities that use disposable or sterilized instruments; abstaining from injection drug use; using condoms; mandatory testing of donor blood; and regular screening of individuals at risk.

Treatment

Modern medicine offers effective treatments for viral hepatitis. Acute forms of hepatitis A and E typically result in full recovery and require supportive care. Chronic hepatitis B is controlled with long-term antiviral medications that suppress viral replication. Hepatitis C, if diagnosed early, can be cured within 8–12 weeks with a course of direct-acting antiviral drugs. The key to successful treatment is early detection, so if you experience any alarming symptoms or belong to a risk group, you should immediately consult an infectious disease specialist or general practitioner.

Doctors' recommendations

Experts recommend: getting vaccinated against hepatitis A and B unless contraindicated; getting blood tested for hepatitis B and C markers at least once a year , especially for healthcare workers, hemodialysis patients, and those who have undergone surgery and blood transfusions; leading a healthy lifestyle, abstaining from alcohol and drugs; monitoring body weight and diet—obesity and fatty liver disease also increase the risk of liver damage; avoiding self-medication and not taking hepatotoxic drugs without a doctor's prescription.

Conclusion

Viral hepatitis is a serious but manageable threat. Effective vaccination, early diagnosis, accessible treatment, and a responsible approach to personal health can break down barriers to eliminating these diseases. Each of us can contribute to this common cause: get tested, get vaccinated, and educate your loved ones about transmission routes and preventative measures.

Take care of your liver – you only have one! Take a step towards better health today.

2026 Motto: " Know to live: Protect yourself from hepatitis! "

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