



28 JULY 2024

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

World Hepatitis Day is held to raise awareness of viral hepatitis. Find out how to recognise the symptoms, get tested and treated.

More than 300 million people live with hepatitis. More than 1.3 million people die each year to hepatitis B and C. (WHO)

WHAT IS HEPATITIS?

Hepatitis is inflammation in your liver and is your body's response to an infection or injury. If it's too severe or goes on too long, it can harm your liver and interfere with its important functions.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms aren't always noticeable at first, but could include:

- Upper abdominal pain especially on the right side
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Fatigue and generally feeling unwell
- Fever (if you have a viral infection)

In severe cases, loss of liver function causes:

- Jaundice (a yellow tint to your skin and eyes)
- Dark-coloured urine and light-coloured stool
- Itchy skin
- Confusion, disorientation or drowsiness

WHAT CAUSES NON-VIRAL HEPATITIS?

Hepatitis can be caused by many factors, including abuse of or excessive use of alcohol, overuse of certain prescription or OTC medications and exposure to toxic chemicals.

- Is non-viral hepatitis transmissible?**
No.
- How is non-viral hepatitis diagnosed?**
 - Liver function blood tests
 - Imaging tests of your liver
- How is non-viral hepatitis treated?**
Treatment includes removing stress factors from your liver, including:
 - Changing your diet and lifestyle.
 - Removing toxins, alcohol and reducing fat in your diet.

WHAT CAUSES VIRAL HEPATITIS?

One of the most common causes of hepatitis is caused by viruses that infect and damage your liver cells, which leads to inflammation and illness. These are commonly referred to as: **Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E**, which are usually chronic or persistent conditions.

- Is viral hepatitis transmissible?**
Yes, it is spread as follows:
 - Hepatitis A and E are commonly spread through contaminated food and water.
 - Hepatitis B, C and D can spread through contact with blood from an infected person, e.g. when sharing needles for intravenous drug use.
 - Hepatitis B and D can spread through other bodily fluids and blood. They are commonly spread through sexual contact and from parent to child during childbirth.
- Viral hepatitis is diagnosed through a blood test.**
- How is viral hepatitis treated?**
 - Viral hepatitis C is curable with antivirals.
 - Viral hepatitis B needs lifelong treatment.
 - Medications and lifestyle changes can reduce the stress on your liver and limit the severity of chronic viral hepatitis.



SCHEME BENEFITS

The Scheme covers the Hepatitis A vaccine as part of its childhood immunisations under the Preventative Care benefits.

NEED HELP? Contact your Scheme for any benefit-related queries you may have.

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