



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Alabamians at risk are urged to learn more about viral hepatitis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urge the public to learn the risk factors of viral hepatitis. May has been designated as Hepatitis Awareness Month. May 19 is the second national observance of Hepatitis Testing Day.

Viral hepatitis (inflammation of the liver) is caused by viral infections and referred to as hepatitis A, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, hepatitis D and hepatitis E.

One in every 10 Americans is affected by some form of liver disease. More than 75 percent of adults with hepatitis C are baby boomers (persons born between 1945 and 1965).

Facts...

- Anyone can get hepatitis B or C, but some populations are disproportionately burdened with these infections, including African Americans; Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; past and current injection drug users; gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men; and persons born between 1945-1965.
- Hepatitis A virus spreads when a person ingests contaminated food or water, is exposed to contaminated objects, or has been in close contact with an infected person.
- Hepatitis B can be transmitted through exposure to blood or through sex. Hepatitis C is mainly transmitted through exposure of blood to blood contact.
- Hepatitis B and C viruses can cause chronic hepatitis, leading to cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer.
- Hepatitis A and B can be prevented with a safe and effective vaccine. There is currently no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C.
- Treatments are available for both hepatitis B and C. There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A.

- Hepatitis D and E are uncommon in the U.S. Hepatitis D can be prevented by hepatitis B vaccination in persons who are not already HBV infected. Hepatitis E usually results in acute infection.

“As a part of our observance, we join the CDC’s Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy and urge other agencies to implement the Action Plan for the Prevention, Care and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis,” said Jane Cheeks, director of the Divisions of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis Prevention and Control.

For more information, visit adph.org/hepatitis.

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