

HEPATITIS AWARENESS MONTH

With a developing epidemic of Hepatitis infections on the rise, it is important to understand what Hepatitis is, what the various causes are, how the virus is spread and how to ensure there are preventative measures in place to decrease your risk. The following resource will help educate your patients on each of these topics as it relates to the three most common types of Hepatitis.

01 | Types of Hepatitis

The Hepatitis virus affects the cells within the liver that become infected and cause inflammation or worse scarring. Did you know that there is more than just one type of virus? In fact, there are 5 main types of the Hepatitis virus which are A, B, C, D and E, plus two additional types – X & G. The following descriptions are of the three types of viruses that cause significant damage to the liver.

- **Hepatitis A:** is caused by the Hepatitis A virus (HAV)
- **Hepatitis B:** is caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV)
- **Hepatitis C:** is caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV)

02 | How Hepatitis Spreads

The viruses can be spread through the following:

- **Hepatitis A (HAV):** is usually spread from person to person by ingesting or coming in contact with contaminated stool of a person with Hepatitis A.
- **Hepatitis B (HBV):** People can become infected with the virus during activities such as birth (spread from an infected mother to her baby during delivery) or sex with an infected partner.
- **Hepatitis C (HCV):** is usually spread when blood from a person infected with the Hepatitis C virus enters the body of someone who is not infected.

03 | Early Signs/Symptoms

The Hepatitis virus can cause slight symptoms or even none at all. If symptoms do appear they will normally occur during 15-180 days of contraction. The initial Hepatitis symptoms may be (but are not limited to):

- Mild flu
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain

03 | Preventative Measures

To reduce your risk of contracting Hepatitis:

- **Hepatitis A (HAV):** consume cooked foods, wash your hands with soap after using the facilities, drink only commercially bottled water.
- **Hepatitis B (HBV):** practice safe sex, only use clean syringes that have not been used by anyone else, do not share toothbrushes, razors or manicured instruments.
- **Hepatitis C (HCV):** Drink alcohol in moderation, do not share drug equipment, and any wounds should be covered.

To learn more about Hepatitis, including resources and testing, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/>

Did You Know?
250 million people are affected by Hep-C globally

References

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/145869.php>
<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Resources/Professionals/PDFs/ABCTable.pdf>