



NATIONAL HEPATITIS TESTING DAY – May 19, 2014

In the United States, May is Hepatitis Awareness Month, and May 19th is National Hepatitis Testing Day. Hepatitis Testing Day is an opportunity to remind health care providers and the public of who should be tested for viral hepatitis. Many of the estimated 800,000 to 1.4 million persons living with hepatitis B and the estimated 3 million persons living with hepatitis C infection are unaware of their infection and are therefore not receiving necessary care and treatment. ¹

Four Things You Should Know About Hepatitis:

1. Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C are all different diseases.
2. Chronic hepatitis is a leading cause of liver cancer. Chronic hepatitis can cause serious damage to the liver, including liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer. Chronic liver disease was the 9th leading cause of death in Washoe County in 2012.
3. Most people with chronic hepatitis do not know they are infected. More than 4 million Americans are living with chronic hepatitis in the United States, but most do not know they are infected.
4. Getting tested could save your life. Lifesaving care and treatments are available for chronic hepatitis, but getting tested is the only way to know if you are infected. ²

Testing for Chronic Hepatitis B Infection

Serologic testing for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) is the primary way to identify persons with chronic hepatitis B infection. Testing for HBsAg is recommended for:

- ◆ Persons born in geographical regions with HBsAg prevalence of $\geq 2\%$. US born persons not vaccinated as infants whose parents were born in geographic regions with HBsAg prevalence of $\geq 8\%$. Regions of the world with high or intermediate prevalence of HBsAg include much of Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific Islands.
- ◆ Persons with a history of injection-drug use.
- ◆ Men who have sex with men.
- ◆ Persons with elevated Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT)/Aspartate Aminotransferase (AST) of unknown etiology.
- ◆ Persons with selected medical conditions who require immunosuppressive therapy.
- ◆ Pregnant women.
- ◆ Infants born to HBsAg-positive mothers.
- ◆ Household contacts and sex partners of hepatitis B infected persons.

- ◆ Persons who are the source of blood or body fluid exposures that might warrant post exposure prophylaxis of the exposed individuals. (e.g., needle stick injury to a health care worker)
- ◆ Persons infected with HIV.³

Testing for Past or Present Hepatitis C Infection⁴

Immunoassays licensed for detection of antibody to hepatitis C virus (HCV), i.e., anti-HCV in blood, should be the initial test of choice for detecting past or present HCV infection. Since 1998, routine HCV testing has been recommended by CDC for persons most likely to be infected with HCV. These recommendations were made on the basis of a known epidemiologic association between a risk factor and acquiring HCV infection. However, many persons with HCV infection do not recall or report having any of risk factors. All adults with identified HCV infection should receive a brief alcohol screening and intervention as clinically indicated, followed by referral to appropriate care and treatment services for HCV infection and related conditions. On April 17, 2012, CDC published its new recommendation. Testing for HCV is now recommended for:

- ◆ All persons born during 1945–1965 regardless of risk factors.
- ◆ HIV-infected patients.
- ◆ Persons who have ever injected illegal drugs, including those who injected once or a few times many years ago and do not consider themselves as drug users.
- ◆ Persons with selected medical conditions, including
 - persons who received clotting factor concentrates produced before 1987;
 - persons who were ever on chronic (long-term) hemodialysis; and
 - persons with persistently abnormal alanine aminotransferase levels.
- ◆ Prior recipients of transfusions or organ transplants, including
 - persons who were notified that they received blood from a donor who later tested positive for HCV infection;
 - persons who received a transfusion of blood or blood components before July 1992; and
 - persons who received an organ transplant before July 1992.
- ◆ Health care, emergency medical, and public safety workers after needle sticks, sharps, or mucosal exposures to HCV-positive blood.
- ◆ Children born to HCV-positive women.

³ <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HBV/TestingChronic.htm>

⁴ http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6104a1.htm?s_cid=rr6104a1_e#Box

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6318a1.htm>

² <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/TestingDay/index.htm>