



World Hepatitis Day 2022



World Hepatitis Day takes place on July 28th every year in Canada and other countries worldwide. This year's theme, [Hepatitis Can't Wait](#), emphasizes the importance of not waiting to act on testing and treatment for the millions of people around the world affected by viral hepatitis.

Here's a snapshot of viral hepatitis. We encourage you to share this with people you know, as we join people around the world to raise awareness about this illness.

What is hepatitis?

Viral hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. There are different viruses that cause hepatitis so symptoms and how it is transmitted vary between types of the illness. Some types of hepatitis can be cured, while others cannot. Hepatitis can be self-limiting (heal on its own), acute, or chronic when it lasts more than six months. Chronic hepatitis can cause serious health implications including liver scarring, cancer and death.

What are the different types of viral hepatitis?

Hepatitis is most commonly caused by the A, B, C, D or E viruses. In B.C., the most prevalent types are hepatitis A, B and C.

- » **Hepatitis A:** People can get hepatitis A through exposure to contaminated food or water. This illness is typically self-limiting and usually does not progress to chronic disease. It is a vaccine-preventable illness.
- » **Hepatitis B:** People can get hepatitis B through contact with the blood or body fluids of someone living with hepatitis B. Approximately 95% of adults who are exposed to hepatitis B will recover with no lasting illness; however, a small portion of adults develop chronic hepatitis B, a lifelong illness, which can cause serious liver disease. Among infants or children who are exposed to hepatitis B, up to 90% will develop chronic hepatitis B. It is a vaccine-preventable illness.
- » **Hepatitis C:** People can get hepatitis C through contact with the blood of a person living with the illness. This can happen in a number of ways, but is most frequently linked to sharing drug use equipment (e.g., needles, pipes, cookers, drug mixes, or water used to prepare mixes), or receiving body services (e.g., tattooing or body piercing) where the tools are not sanitized properly. While there is no vaccine for hepatitis C, there are things you can do to lower your risk of being exposed to the virus and newer hepatitis C treatments are very effective at eliminating the virus. Visit [HealthLinkBC](#) for more information about hepatitis C virus.

WE CAN'T WAIT FOR A WORLD WITHOUT HEPATITIS

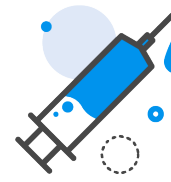
Together we can make it happen.



World Hepatitis Day
28 July
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Where can I get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B?



Hepatitis A and B are vaccine-preventable illnesses so getting immunized is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from getting the virus.

- » **Hepatitis A:** The [hepatitis A vaccine](#) is provided at no-cost in B.C. to people who are at high risk of exposure to the virus or who have severe illness, such as people living with HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C or chronic liver disease. The vaccine is also recommended, but not provided free of charge, for people who are likely to come into contact with or spread the virus. For example, those who live in, work or travel to countries where hepatitis A is common, food handlers and other occupations. You can get the vaccine from your primary care provider, pharmacy, public health clinic or travel health clinic.
- » **Hepatitis B:** The [hepatitis B vaccine](#) is part of the childhood routine immunization schedule in B.C. and is provided at no cost to British Columbians born after 1980, as well as for children and adults who may have had [more contact with the virus](#) (e.g., in a country where the virus is more common). You can get the vaccine from your primary care provider, pharmacy, public health clinic or travel clinic.

How is hepatitis diagnosed? How can I get a test?



If you have symptoms of [hepatitis A](#) or may have been exposed to the virus, your doctor or nurse practitioner may recommend you to get a blood test to find out if you have an infection now or had it in the past. In B.C., it is recommended that only people with certain [risk factors](#) need to be tested for hepatitis B or C.

People with on-going risk factors for hepatitis B or hepatitis C should be tested at least annually. A health professional can help you access lab testing to diagnose hepatitis B or C. In some B.C. communities, you can access a lab requisition directly online through the [GetChecked Online program](#). You can also visit the [BC Hepatitis Network](#) to learn more about how to get a test and who should get tested. Many people who have hepatitis B or C may not have symptoms and may not know they have the virus. Some people may have a brief illness and notice symptoms six to 12 weeks after they were exposed to the virus. This is why it's important to get tested if you think you may have been exposed to the [hepatitis B or C virus](#).

What happens if I am diagnosed with a hepatitis B or C infection?

I CAN'T WAIT

The sooner I start treatment for hepatitis, the better chance I have of a long and healthy life.

Don't wait. Speak to your health professional.



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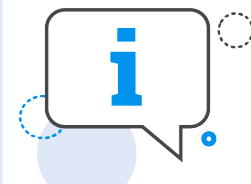


Hepatitis B treatment is not recommended for all patients because in most cases, hepatitis goes away on its own, patients can monitor as well as manage their symptoms at home. On the other hand, hepatitis C treatment is recommended for those with chronic hepatitis C infection.

If you are diagnosed with a chronic hepatitis B or C infection, you should see a health-care provider who is experienced in managing and treating these infections, so they can assess the health of your liver and explain the treatment options that may be suitable for you. In B.C., there are several types of specialists and some primary care providers who accept referrals for hepatitis B or C patients, so ask the health professional who gave you your diagnosis if they can give you a referral to a specialist or care provider. There are also some providers who accept patient self-referrals and you can find them on the [BCCDC's Hepatitis Clinics Map](#).

If you are living with hepatitis C or would like to learn more about it, the [BC Hepatitis C Network](#) can connect you with local support groups in your area; they also have a free helpline, [Help4HepBC](#) (1-888-411-7578) that you can call to talk with a peer navigator at anytime.

Where can I find more information?



Visit the websites below to learn more about different types of hepatitis, prevention, treatment and support available in B.C.

- » [HealthLinkBC](#)
- » [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- » [ImmunizeBC](#)
- » [B.C. Hepatitis Network](#)
- » [BC Viral Hepatitis Testing Guidelines](#)