



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACTS: Julie Pryde, Director
Division of Infectious Disease Prevention
& Management, (217) 239-7827
Diana Yates, Director of Health Promotion
(217) 531-4275, mobile: (217) 202-7781
Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

May is National Hepatitis Awareness Month

Public Health Urges Those at Risk of Hepatitis A or B to Get Vaccinated

May is National Hepatitis Awareness Month, an observance to draw attention to viral diseases of the liver.

Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B are vaccine-preventable diseases. Public Health offers both Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B immunizations to those who visit one of its Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) clinics in Champaign, Urbana or Rantoul. Anyone 19 years of age or older who visits an STD clinic is eligible for the vaccines, as is anyone who is HIV-positive. (See STD Clinic schedule, below.)

Parents of children who need Hepatitis B vaccines may contact the Division of Maternal and Child Health Management to schedule an appointment at (217) 531-4304.

Those at high risk for Hepatitis (injection drug users who share needles, for example) may also be screened for Hepatitis C.

Although all three viral diseases are called Hepatitis, each disease is unique:

- **Hepatitis A** is found in the stool (feces) of persons with hepatitis A.
- Hepatitis A is usually spread from person to person by putting something in the mouth (even though it may look clean) that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A.
- **Hepatitis B** transmission occurs when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected.
- Hepatitis B is spread through having sex with an infected person without using a condom (the efficacy of latex condoms in preventing infection with HBV is unknown, but their proper use may reduce transmission), by sharing drugs, needles, or "works" when "shooting" drugs, through needlesticks or sharps exposures on the job, or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.
- Persons at risk for Hepatitis B infection might also be at risk for infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV) or HIV.
- **Hepatitis C** infection occurs when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected.
- HCV is spread through sharing needles or "works" when "shooting" drugs, through needlesticks or sharps exposures on the job, or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.
- There is no vaccine available to prevent Hepatitis C.

Public Health offers three weekly STD clinics for Champaign County residents:

Mondays: Rantoul clinic (720 E. Wabash - 893-0832) 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Tuesdays: Champaign clinic (710 N. Neil - 531 -4317) 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Thursdays: Champaign clinic (710 N. Neil - 531-4317) 9:00 – 11:00 a.m., and 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Public Health is part of a national effort to reduce Hepatitis incidence and prevalence. Nurses in the Division of Infectious Disease Prevention & Management perform outreach and testing at local jails, juvenile detention centers, schools and homeless shelters.

For more information, please contact the Division of Infectious Disease Prevention and Management at (217) 239-7827.