



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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July 28th is Recognized as World Hepatitis Day

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Honors Today as
World Hepatitis Day*

Champaign, IL – The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) honors July 28th as World Hepatitis Day to raise awareness of hepatitis B and hepatitis C. World Hepatitis Day was launched by the World Hepatitis Alliance in 2008.

The alliance is a non-governmental coalition of advocacy groups that serves as a global voice for the 500 million people worldwide living with chronic viral hepatitis B or C. According to the World Hepatitis Alliance, one in 12 people are living with either chronic hepatitis B or C which surpasses the number of individuals living with HIV or any cancer. The goals of the alliance are not only to raise awareness, but to extend existing support for the disease with long-term goals of preventing new infections and delivering improvements in health outcomes for people living with hepatitis.

Hepatitis is the inflammation of the liver and can be caused by a wide range of things. One of the most common causes of chronic hepatitis is viral infection. Together, hepatitis B and C virus kill approximately one million people per year and one in three people have been exposed to one or both viruses.

Hepatitis B is spread through direct contact with infected blood as well as most major bodily fluids; hepatitis C is spread through direct contact with infected blood, but in rare cases, it may be passed through bodily fluids. Many people do not have any symptoms but can still transmit the viruses to others. If left untreated or unmanaged, both viruses can lead to advanced liver scarring (cirrhosis) and other serious complications including liver cancer or liver failure.

Viral hepatitis can be prevented by taking the following steps and encouraging others to do the same:

- Get vaccinated for hepatitis B (no vaccine available for hepatitis C)
- Practice safer sex
- Use only clean needles for tattoos and body piercings
- Do not share needles
- Do not share razors, toothbrushes, or other personal items
- Get medical care if you are exposed to blood or needle sticks

CUPHD co-sponsors a hepatitis support group to those of all ages. Anyone with hepatitis and their friends and family members may attend. The group meets at the Carle Forum in the Fritz Room at 611 West Park Street in Urbana the second Wednesday of every month from 6:00 - 7:30 PM.

For more information on hepatitis, please call (217) 239-7827 or visit CUPHD on the web at www.c-uphd.org.

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