

World Hepatitis Day is recognized annually on July 28th, the birthday of Dr. Baruch Blumberg (1925–2011). Dr. Blumberg discovered the hepatitis B virus in 1967, and 2 years later he developed the first hepatitis B vaccine.

The five hepatitis viruses: A, B, C, D, and E. Each virus is distinct and can spread in different ways, affect different populations, and result in different health outcomes.

**Hepatitis A** is a vaccine-preventable liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is found in the stool and blood of people who are infected. Hepatitis A is very contagious. It is spread when someone unknowingly ingests the virus — even in microscopic amounts — through close personal contact with an infected person or through eating contaminated food or drink.

Symptoms of hepatitis A can last up to 2 months and include:

- fatigue,
- nausea,
- stomach pain,
- and jaundice.

Most people with hepatitis A do not have long-lasting illness. The best way to prevent hepatitis A is to get vaccinated.

**Hepatitis B** is a vaccine-preventable liver infection caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). Hepatitis B is spread when blood, semen, or other body fluids from a person infected with the virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. This can happen through sexual contact; sharing needles, syringes, or other drug-injection equipment; or from mother to baby at birth.

Not all people newly infected with HBV have symptoms, but for those that do, symptoms can include:

- fatigue,
- poor appetite,
- stomach pain,
- nausea,
- and jaundice.

For many people, hepatitis B is a short-term illness. For others, it can become a long-term, chronic infection that can lead to serious, even life-threatening health issues like cirrhosis or liver cancer. Risk for chronic infection is related to age at infection: about 90% of infants with hepatitis B go on to develop chronic infection, whereas only 2%–6% of people who get hepatitis B as adults become chronically infected. The best way to prevent hepatitis B is to get vaccinated.

**Hepatitis C** is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Hepatitis C is spread through contact with blood from an infected person. Today, most people become infected with the hepatitis C virus by sharing needles or other equipment used to prepare and inject drugs. For some people, hepatitis C is a short-term illness, but for more than half of people who become infected with the hepatitis C virus, it becomes a long-term, chronic infection. Chronic hepatitis C can result in serious, even life-threatening health problems like cirrhosis and liver cancer.

People with chronic hepatitis C often have no symptoms and don't feel sick. When symptoms appear, they often are a sign of advanced liver disease. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. The best way to prevent hepatitis C is by avoiding behaviors that can spread the disease, especially injecting drugs. Getting tested for hepatitis C is important, because treatments can cure most people with hepatitis C in 8 to 12 weeks.

**Hepatitis D**, also known as “delta hepatitis,” is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis D virus (HDV). Hepatitis D only occurs in people who are also infected with the hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis D is spread when blood or other body fluids from a person infected with the virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. Hepatitis D can be an acute, short-term infection or become a long-term, chronic infection.

Hepatitis D can cause severe symptoms and serious illness that can lead to life-long liver damage and even death. People can become infected with both hepatitis B and hepatitis D viruses at the same time (known as “coinfection”) or get hepatitis D after first being infected with the hepatitis B virus (known as “superinfection”). There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis D. However, prevention of hepatitis B with hepatitis B vaccine also protects against hepatitis D infection.

**Hepatitis E** is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis E virus (HEV). HEV is found in the stool of an infected person. It is spread when someone unknowingly ingests the virus – even in microscopic amounts. In developing countries, people most often get hepatitis E from drinking water contaminated by feces from people who are infected with the virus.

In the United States and other developed countries where hepatitis E is not common, people have gotten sick with hepatitis E after eating raw or undercooked pork, venison, wild boar meat, or shellfish.

Learn more at [World Hepatitis Day is July 28th | CDC](#)