



Hepatitis B

## AWARENESS

# HEPATITIS NEEDS YOUR URGENT ATTENTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that is caused by a variety of infectious viruses and noninfectious agents leading to a range of health problems, some of which can be fatal.”

### Hepatitis statistics

There are various hepatitis strains, including A, B, C, D, and E, that differ according to the severity of liver disease, the transmission of the infection, and prevention, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In 2019, the CDC further reported an estimated 1.1 million global deaths from hepatitis B and C, which can lead to lifelong infection.

### Hepatitis and prevention explained

The CDC, WHO, Mayo Clinic, and WebMD offer these definitions and preventable measures for the various strains of hepatitis:

- **Hepatitis A virus (HAV)** is highly contagious and is transferred through close contact with an infected person. Ingestion of contaminated food or drink - even microscopic amounts – leads to infection. Symptoms include nausea, fatigue, stomach pain, and jaundice – and these can persist for two months. A hepatitis A vaccine may protect you from infection.
- **Hepatitis B virus (HBV)** is spread through bodily fluids, such as blood and semen. A person can be infected through sexual intercourse, sharing needles, or from mother to infant at birth.

- The symptoms are the same as HAV, along with poor appetite. The chronic risk is more severe for infants, who have a 90% chance of chronic infection, whereas adults only have a 2% – 6% chance. There is a vaccine that protects against HBV. Getting the HBV vaccine if you haven’t already been infected is key to prevention, says WebMD.
- **Hepatitis C virus (HCV)** can be fatal because more than half of infected individuals have chronic infection, and there aren’t any symptoms for most people. HCV is spread through blood and can be treated within eight to 12 weeks after infection. Primary prevention interventions recommended by the WHO include regular testing.
- **Hepatitis D virus (HDV)** only infects those with HDV and can cause acute symptoms or chronic illnesses. There is no cure for HDV, nor is there “a vaccine to prevent hepatitis D”, says the CDC, however, “prevention of hepatitis B with hepatitis B vaccine also protects against future hepatitis D infection”.
- **Hepatitis E virus (HEV)** is a strain that most infected people fully recover from, according to the CDC. The symptoms are the same as HAV and HBV, although many people will not present with symptoms, adds the CDC.