



AWARENESS

SHOULD YOU CONSIDER GETTING TESTED FOR HEPATITIS?

Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E are all different types of viral infections that affect the liver. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, viral hepatitis (types A, B and C) are a major global health threat – where it’s estimated that as many as one in 12 people are living with either chronic hepatitis B or C.

Left undiagnosed and untreated in its early stages, a hepatitis infection can have serious consequences and in some cases it can be deadly. However, millions of people don’t have any symptoms and don’t even know that they are infected until much later on, when their livers are already damaged. It is for this reason that 28 July is **World Hepatitis Day**, which is marked to help find the “missing millions” who will continue to suffer without proper care.

Who should get tested?

While viral hepatitis (depending on the type) may be transmitted in various ways, according to the UK National Health Service (NHS), people who may be at higher risk for becoming infected and passing infections on to others include:

- Recipients of organ transplants
- Women who are pregnant
- Drug-users and ex-drug users
- Those who may have had contaminated tattoos or body piercings
- Those with a history of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV

- Men who have same sex partners (higher risk for hepatitis A and B)
- Recipients of kidney dialysis
- People who have lived in or had any medical treatment in high risk areas where hepatitis C is known to be common, for example the Middle East and North Africa.
- Those who have not been vaccinated for hepatitis A and B, or those who are not sure. **NB.** There is no vaccination for hepatitis C.

What does testing involve?

If you think you may have been exposed to hepatitis, you’ll need to go for a blood test in order to confirm a diagnosis and determine the specific type of infection.

If the blood test comes back positive, you may be referred to a specialist for further tests in order to assess how active the virus is and to check if your liver has been damaged. The specialist would then discuss various treatment options with you.

The good news is that early intervention can suppress or even wipe out the virus. Help spread the word about getting tested and remember to take responsibility for your own health and the lives of your loved ones.

If you suspect you may have any of the symptoms mentioned consult with health professional as soon as possible.