

Public Health Points

York City Bureau of Health

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May is Hepatitis Awareness Month

The word “hepatitis” means inflammation (“itis”) of the liver (“hepa”). Certain toxins, drugs, and diseases, heavy alcohol use, and bacterial and viral infections can all cause hepatitis. Hepatitis is also the name of a family of viral infections that affect the liver. In the United States, the most common types of viral hepatitis are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis A virus (HAV) causes a self-limited disease that does not result in chronic infection or chronic liver disease. HAV infection is primarily transmitted by the fecal-oral route, by either person-to-person contact or through consumption of contaminated food or water. Hepatitis A vaccination is the most effective measure to prevent HAV infection and is recommended for all children at age 1 year, certain international travelers and others at risk for HAV infection.

Hepatitis B is a serious liver infection caused by Hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV infection can cause acute illness and lead to chronic or lifelong infection, cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. HBV is transmitted through percutaneous (puncture through the skin) or mucosal contact with infectious blood or body fluids. Hepatitis B vaccination is the most effective measure to prevent HBV infection and its consequences and is recommended for all infants and others at risk for HBV infection.

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV) that sometimes results in an acute infection, but most often becomes a silent, chronic infection that can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure, liver cancer, and death. Chronic HCV infection develops in a majority of HCV-infected persons, most of whom do not know they are infected since they have no symptoms. HCV is spread by contact with the blood of an infected persons. There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C.

Vaccines for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B have done much to reduce the incidence of new cases over recent years. However, the lack of a vaccine for Hepatitis C allows this serious infection to continue at epidemic proportions. After the Sexually Transmitted Infections Chlamydia and Gonorrhea, Hepatitis C infection is the third most commonly reported communicable disease in the U.S. Because Hepatitis C infection can start out so mild or even asymptomatic, most people living with Hepatitis C do not know they are infected and can live for decades without having symptoms or feeling sick.

Another interesting fact concerning Hepatitis C is that nearly 3 in 4 people with Hepatitis C were born during the year 1945 through 1965 (“Baby Boomers”). To address this ongoing, serious and largely silent epidemic the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends that all Baby Boomers get tested for Hepatitis C.

Getting tested can help people learn if they are infected and get them into lifesaving care and treatment. New anti-viral medications are now available that can eliminate the virus from the body and prevent liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

For more information about viral hepatitis infections and about May as Hepatitis Awareness Month check CDC’s website at www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.

Reportable Conditions 2014 York, PA

Reported Cases	Mar. 2014	Cum.
Animal Bites	11	18
Chlamydia	38	119
Gonorrhea	13	40
Hepatitis B	0	2
Hepatitis C	8	22
HIV Infection	1	3
Influenza Type A	5	46
Influenza Type B	1	3
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection	3	29
Total Case Reports	80	282

City Health Bureau Awarded Grant for Chronic Disease Self-Management Program

The York City Bureau of Health has been awarded a grant and selected, as 1 of 12 sites in the nation, to participate in the 2014 Developing Capacity to Deliver Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP). This opportunity has been granted through the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), with support from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is an evidence-based program, developed by the Division of Family and Community Medicine in the School of Medicine at Stanford University.

The CDSMP is an educational workshop held for 2½ hours weekly for six weeks to people with different chronic health issues. Workshops will be facilitated by trained health educators from the Bureau of Health. The Self-Management Program does not conflict with existing programs or medical treatment, but rather teaches participants skills to coordinate a variety of things needed to manage their health. Classes are highly participative, where mutual support and success build the participants' confidence in their ability to manage their health and maintain active and fulfilling lives.

Workshop topics include:

- techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation
- appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance
- appropriate use of medications
- communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals
- nutrition
- decision making
- how to evaluate new treatments

Workshops will be offered in community settings and conducted by trained leaders. Programs are expected to begin this summer. Persons interested in participating should contact Aerielle Waters at 717-846-6730 or awaters@yorkcity.org.

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