

Hepatitis and Liver Disease in the United States

- 25,000,000 Americans - one in every 10 - are or have been afflicted with a liver, biliary or gallbladder disease.
- 20,300 Americans die each year from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis; 360,000 people are hospitalized each year due to cirrhosis.
- Alcoholic liver disease and chronic hepatitis C are the leading causes of cirrhosis.
- An estimated 25,000 people are infected with hepatitis C each year.
- There are over 4 million people who are or have been infected with hepatitis C; 2.7 of whom are chronically infected. Approximately 70% of people infected do not know that they have the virus.
- 10,000 - 12,000 people die of hepatitis C each year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that the number of annual deaths from hepatitis C will triple in the next 10 - 20 years.
- Hepatitis B is responsible for 5,000 - 6,000 deaths annually.
- One out of every 250 people is a carrier of hepatitis B and can pass it on to others, often unknowingly.
- 78,000 people are infected with the hepatitis B virus each year; 1.25 million people are chronically infected.
- Up to 90% of pregnant women who are carriers of the hepatitis B virus (HBV) could transmit the virus to their children. Due to the screening of pregnant women for HBV and vaccinations of newborns, there has been a decline in the number of infected newborns.
- Approximately 5,600 liver transplants were performed in 2003. Because of the shortage of organs, it is estimated that over 1,800 people died that year while waiting for a liver transplant. There are currently over 17,700 people waiting for a liver for transplantation.
- There were over 90,000 new infections of hepatitis A in 2001.
- The estimated medical and work loss cost per year of hepatitis B is over \$700 million; the estimated medical and work loss costs per year of hepatitis C is over \$600 million.
- You are at risk of hepatitis C infection if you:
 - have ever injected illegal drugs, even if you only experimented once many years ago

- received a blood transfusion or solid organ transplant before July 1992
 - received a blood product for clotting problems produced before 1987
 - have ever been on long-term kidney dialysis
 - have received a tattoo or body piercing in unsafe conditions
 - have unprotected sex with multiple partners
- You are at risk of hepatitis B infection if you:
 - have sex with someone who is infected with HBV
 - have unprotected sex with multiple partners
 - live in the same house with someone who is infected with HBV
 - have a job that involves contact with human blood (e.g. nurse, emergency medical technician)
 - inject illegal drugs
 - have hemophilia
 - travel to areas where hepatitis B is common
- Asian Americans have the highest rate of hepatitis B in the country; the prevalence rate among Chinese Americans is 5 times higher than that of Caucasian Americans.
 - African Americans have the highest rate of infection with hepatitis C in the country; African Americans are twice as likely to be infected with the virus as non-Hispanic Caucasian Americans.

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