National Hepatitis Testing Day 2019

Four things you should know to be #HepAware.

May 17, 2019 By Trent Straube

May is hepatitis awareness month, and Sunday, May 19, marks National Hepatitis Testing Day 2019. It's a chance to remind the public and health care providers alike that everyone should be tested for viral hepatitis.

What's viral hepatitis? There are three main types: Hepatitis A virus (HAV), hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) all infect liver cells called hepatocytes. The body's immune system responds to such an infection with inflammation of the liver (hepatitis). Infections can be severe and last for years, causing fibers to harden and result in scarring (cirrhosis) that impedes blood flow through the liver, all of which can lead to many health problems and even death. That's why it's important to be tested.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) underscores four facts you should know about viral hepatitis:

- Hepatitis A, B and C are all different diseases.
- Chronic hepatitis (including hep B and C) is the leading cause of liver cancer.
- Most people with chronic hepatitis do not know they have the virus.
- Getting tested could save your life.

The good news is that more than 90% of hep C cases can be cured, and treatments that can slow down hep B are now available. Vaccines are available for hep A and B.

You can take the CDC's five-minute risk assessment quiz here.

And you can learn the basics of hepatitis on Hep Mag here and read about hepatitis C and HIV coinfection in POZ magazine here. Plus, don't miss "8 Ways to Observe Hepatitis Awareness Month" and "Smart Insight About HIV and Hep B Among Asians and Pacific Islanders."

Search for awareness day events, testing sites and further info on social media using the hashtags #HepAware19, #HepTestingDay and #Hepatitis.

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