

World Hepatitis Day

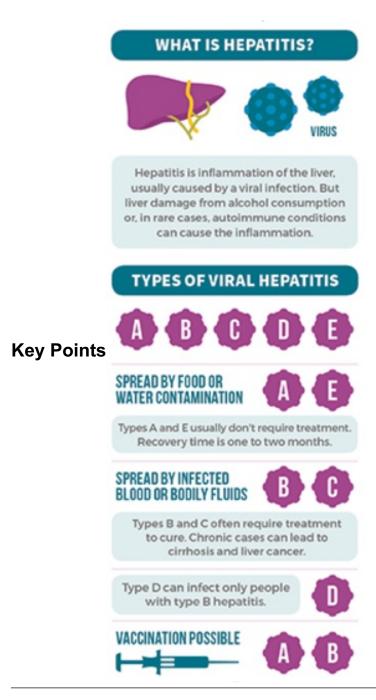


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Why in News

World Hepatitis Day is observed each year on 28th July to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis.

The theme for the **year 2020** is "**Hepatitis-free future**", with a strong focus on preventing hepatitis B among mothers and newborns.



• Hepatitis:

- The word hepatitis refers to any **inflammation of the liver** the irritation or swelling of the liver cells **from any cause.**
- It can be **acute** (inflammation of the liver that presents with sickness jaundice, fever, vomiting) or **chronic** (inflammation of the liver that lasts more than six months, but **essentially showing no symptoms).**

• Causes:

- Usually caused by a group of viruses known as the "hepatotropic" (liver directed) viruses, including A, B, C, D and E.
- Other viruses may also cause it, such as the varicella virus that causes chicken pox. SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing <u>Covid-19</u> may injure the liver, too.
- Other causes include **drugs and alcohol abuse**, **fat buildup in the liver** (fatty liver hepatitis) or an **autoimmune process** in which a person's body makes antibodies that attack the liver (autoimmune hepatitis).

• Treatment:

- **Hepatitis A and E are self-limiting diseases** (i.e. go away on their own) and require no specific antiviral medications.
- For Hepatitis B and C, effective **medications are available.**

• Global Scenario:

- Hepatitis B and C together are the **most common cause** of deaths, with 1.3 million lives lost each year.
- In 2016, 194 governments across the globe adopted WHO's global strategy which aims at eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030.

• Indian Scenario:

- 40 million people are chronically infected with Hepatitis B virus and 6 to 12 million with Hepatitis C virus.
- In 2018, the government launched the **National Viral Hepatitis Program.**The program is the largest program for Hepatitis B and C diagnosis and treatment in the world.

Note:

- Hepatitis B is included under <u>India's Universal Immunization Programme</u>
 (<u>UIP</u>) which provides free of cost vaccination against eleven (excluding
 Hepatitis B) vaccine-preventable diseases i.e. Tuberculosis, Diphtheria,
 Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Pneumonia and Meningitis due to Haemophilus Influenzae
 type b (Hib), Measles, Rubella, Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Rotavirus diarrhoea.
- <u>Bangladesh</u>, <u>Bhutan</u>, <u>Nepal and Thailand</u> became the <u>first four countries in</u> the World Health Organization's Southeast Asia region to have successfully controlled Hepatitis B.
- Recently, an automated coronavirus testing device named <u>'COBAS 6800'</u> was launched which can **also detect viral Hepatitis B & C**, among others.
- It can be noted that only for four diseases viz. HIV-AIDS (1st December), TB (24th March), Malaria (25th April), and Hepatitis, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially endorses <u>disease-specific global awareness</u> <u>days.</u>

Source: PIB