



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**.

WHAT IS HEPATITIS?



Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver, usually caused by a viral infection. But liver damage from alcohol consumption or, in rare cases, autoimmune conditions can cause the inflammation.

TYPES OF VIRAL HEPATITIS



SPREAD BY FOOD OR WATER CONTAMINATION



Types A and E usually don't require treatment. Recovery time is one to two months.

SPREAD BY INFECTED BLOOD OR BODILY FLUIDS



Types B and C often require treatment to cure. Chronic cases can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Type D can infect only people with type B hepatitis.



VACCINATION POSSIBLE



Key Points

- **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 **Covid-19** 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 **India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)** 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.
- **Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand** became the **first four countries in the World Health Organization’s Southeast Asia** region to have successfully **controlled Hepatitis B**.
- Recently, an automated coronavirus testing device named **‘COBAS 6800’** 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 **disease-specific global awareness days**.

Source: PIB