



CalHEP Information on Viral Hepatitis

Facts on Hepatitis B and C

Chronic infections from the hepatitis B and C viruses affect nearly 1 million Californians, have an immense impact on health and well-being, and are the leading causes for liver cancer and liver transplantation in our State. Ethnic minorities, including those of Asian/Pacific Island descent, African-Americans, and Latinos, are disproportionately affected. Although prevention is possible and treatments are available, many persons at-risk or affected by these conditions are neither tested nor treated due to lack of knowledge or access to care. Prevention education and early detection are the keys to thwarting cirrhosis, cancer, and liver failure and controlling costs associated with these potentially deadly diseases. Links to CDC Fact Sheets: [Hepatitis: A-B-C Fact Sheet for Health Professionals](#); [Hepatitis: A Fact Sheet for Consumers](#); and [Hepatitis C: General Information](#)

About Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). The virus is spread through direct contact with the blood, serum, or sexual fluids of an infected person. HBV is most commonly spread through unprotected sexual intercourse; from mother to child at the time of delivery; by contaminated drug injecting equipment; or through needle stick injuries. There are 280,000 chronic hepatitis B infections in California.

About Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Hepatitis C is primarily spread by blood to blood contact, including contaminated drug injecting equipment or blood transfusions before 1992, but about 15% of cases are related to sexual transmission. 600,000 Californians have been exposed to hepatitis C. [Click to link to the rest of the report.](#)