
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 17, 2024

GTCHD BRINGS AWARENESS TO WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) and the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance, along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Hepatitis Alliance (WHA), are bringing awareness to [World Hepatitis Day](#) (WHD) on July 28, 2024. With 337 members in 102 countries, WHD is a day to unite patient organizations, governments, medical professionals, and the public to boost awareness of viral hepatitis.

"Hepatitis is an infection that causes inflammation of the liver," said GTCHD Medical Director Najibah Rehman, MD, MPH. "There are [five types of viruses that cause hepatitis](#), the three most common being Hepatitis A, B, and C in the United States. Hepatitis A is acute and presents like severe food poisoning, while B and C can cause chronic infections that may progress to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even the need for liver transplant."

According to both the CDC and the WHA:

- Every 30 seconds someone loses their life to a [hepatitis](#) related illness.
- Hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer.
- It affects more than 300 million people worldwide.
- There are over two million new cases of hepatitis every year.
- In the U.S., only 25% of the total cases are diagnosed

"Prevention is the most important factor," said Dr. Rehman. "However, early detection, linkage to care, and proper treatment are key to slowing the progression of Hepatitis, if infected. Hepatitis A and B are vaccine-preventable diseases, and although there is no current vaccine for Hepatitis C, there is a curative treatment that has saved a multitude of lives, particularly in the past decade."

Healthcare professionals advise that adults get tested for hepatitis C at least once in their lifetime and routinely if there are additional risk factors. They also encourage people to stay current on immunizations.

GTCHD offers hepatitis A and B vaccines and can test for hepatitis B and C. For the treatment of hepatitis, we refer clients to contact their healthcare provider. Call our team at 231-995-6111 to make an appointment or visit our website at www.gtcountymi.gov/2211/Health.

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