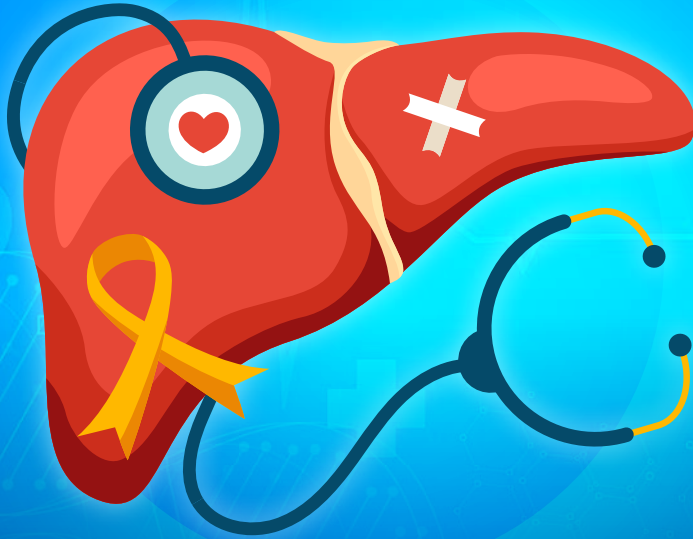


28TH JULY 2025



# WORLD HEPATITIS DAY



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# WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

## World Hepatitis Day 28th July 2025 “Lets break it down. Get the facts, take action”.

Today we recognise World Hepatitis Day which is a disease affecting Papua New Guineans all around the country causing devastating effects on individuals and families. Hepatitis is the world’s deadliest virus, after COVID-19 with over 2 million new cases worldwide each year and more than 300 people currently living with it. Prevention is always better than cure, talk to your doctor about your hepatitis risk. Stopping the spread starts with us, remember to wash your hands regularly, keep up to date with medical check-ups, get vaccinated where possible and stay home when you are sick.

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that is caused by a variety of infectious viruses and non-infectious agents leading to a range of health problems, some of which can be fatal. There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E. While they all cause liver disease, they differ in important ways including modes of transmission, severity of the illness, geographical distribution and prevention methods. A WHO study found that an estimated 4.5 million premature deaths could be prevented in low- and middle-income countries by 2030 through vaccination, diagnostic tests, medicines and education awareness.

Hepatitis is common in PNG and can be fatal if left untreated. If you suspect you may have hepatitis it is important to talk to a medical professional for diagnosis and treatment.

### World Hepatitis Alliance:

Each year, more than a million people lose their lives to hepatitis – and the number of deaths is rising. But why when we have fast and accurate tests, effective and affordable treatments, and a proven vaccine that could prevent 95% of newborns from getting hepatitis B. Low awareness, misinformation, myths and stigma are stopping people from accessing hepatitis services and leading to a lack of action by decision makers.

This World Hepatitis Day let’s break down the barriers holding us back from a hepatitis-free world. The World Hepatitis Alliance, our partners, allies, and our 400 members in 120 countries are calling for action to end this entirely preventable disease.

### Fast Facts:

- Hepatitis is the world’s deadliest virus, after COVID19.
- There are over 2 million new cases of hepatitis every year.
- More than 300 million people are living with hepatitis.

- Hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer.
- We have everything we need to eliminate hepatitis by 2030 – but the world is moving backwards.

Learn more: <https://www.worldhepatitisday.org>

### WHAT IS HEPATITIS?

Your liver is a vital organ responsible for many functions in the body some of which include bile production which helps carry away waste and break down fats in the small intestine during digestion, production of certain proteins for blood plasma and cholesterol and proteins to help carry fats through the body, storing and releasing glucose, processing of haemoglobin, cleansing the blood, fighting infection and regulates blood clotting. Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver; the condition can be self-limiting or can progress to fibrosis (scarring), cirrhosis, or liver cancer, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). An estimated 354 million people worldwide live with hepatitis B or C with access to testing and treatment hard to reach. Hepatitis viruses are the most common cause of Hepatitis however, other infections, toxic substances (alcohol, certain drugs), and autoimmune diseases can also cause Hepatitis. Most symptoms go unnoticed until the disease is advanced which means a huge number of people go undiagnosed for a long time, and even when diagnosed only a small percentage of people receive treatment.

### TYPES OF HEPATITIS

There are 5 Hepatitis viruses referred to as types A, B, C, D, and E, and all vary in different ways, including modes of transmission, the severity of the illness, geographical distribution, and prevention methods.

**Hepatitis A:** Hepatitis A is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis A virus, which is primarily spread when an uninfected and unvaccinated person ingests food or water that is contaminated with the faeces of an infected person. Risk factors for Hepatitis A include poor sanitation, lack of safe water and food, poor personal hygiene. WHO estimates that Hepatitis A caused approximately 7,134 deaths in 2016. Almost everyone recovers fully from Hepatitis A with a lifelong immunity while a small proportion die from fulminant Hepatitis. Not everyone who is infected will experience all these symptoms however those infected may experience mild to severe symptoms including fever, malaise, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark-coloured urine, and jaundice. Recovery from Hepatitis A may take several weeks or months, and symptoms may be relieved with rest and adequate fluid intake and avoiding unnecessary medications such as Acetaminophen/ Paracetamol, anti-vomiting

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medications, and alcohol. It is important to practice good personal hygiene to prevent Hepatitis A including washing your hands after going to the toilet, after changing nappies before eating or preparing food and avoid drinking water that may not be clean and eating uncooked fruits or vegetables as well as talking to your doctor about a vaccine. People with Hepatitis A should not return to work or school until they are better to avoid the spread to others.

**Hepatitis B:** Hepatitis B is a potentially life-threatening infection caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV), which is most commonly transmitted from mother to child during birth and delivery, as well as through contact with blood or other body fluids. There were an estimated 254 million people were living with chronic hepatitis B infection in 2022, with 1.2 million new infections each year according to WHO. The Hepatitis B virus can survive outside the body for at least 7 days, during this time the virus can still cause infection if it enters the body of a person who is not protected by the vaccine. Those infected may experience jaundice, dark urine, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain, though not everyone infected will experience symptoms. Chronic hepatitis B infection can be treated with oral medicines while treatment for acute Hepatitis B is aimed at maintaining comfort and adequate nutritional balance, replacement of fluids lost from vomiting and diarrhoea and avoiding unnecessary medications. When preventing Hepatitis B, it is important always to practice safe sex, wash your hands after touching blood or bodily fluids, avoid sharing personal hygiene items, use new and sterile injecting or piercing equipment, dispose of any sanitary items properly, cover all cuts or open sores with bandages. Talk to your doctor about Hepatitis B vaccination.

**World Hepatitis Day, 28th July 2025 “Lets break it down. Get the facts, take action”.**

#### **Health information on Hepatitis, Part 2 of 2.**

**Hepatitis C:** Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus which can cause both acute and chronic hepatitis ranging from mild to severe which can cause lifelong illnesses such as liver cirrhosis and cancer. Globally, an estimated 50 million people have chronic hepatitis C virus infection, with about 1.0 million new infections occurring per year according to World Health Organization. Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus which is most commonly transmitted through sharing of injection equipment; the reuse or inadequate sterilization of medical equipment; the transfusion of unscreened blood and blood products; and less commonly through sexual contact, sharing personal hygiene items that have come in contact with blood.

Less commonly, HCV can also be transmitted sexually and can be passed from an infected mother to baby. Hepatitis C is not spread through breast milk, food, water, or casual contact such as hugging, kissing, and sharing food or drinks with an infected person. Many of those infected do not experience symptoms in the early stages however could experience fever, fatigue, decreased appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, grey- coloured faeces, joint pain, and jaundice may occur for those who are symptomatic. Around 30% of infected persons clear the virus within 6 months without any treatment, according to WHO, while the remaining 70% approx. of persons will develop chronic HCV infection. There is currently no vaccine against Hepatitis C, antiviral medications aim to cure the infection to reduce the risk of death from cirrhosis and liver cancer, but access to diagnosis and treatment is low which is why it is important to speak to your doctor if you are at an increased risk of infection.

**Hepatitis D:** Hepatitis D is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis D virus (HDV) that requires HBV for its replication and cannot occur in the absence of Hepatitis B virus.

The combination of HDV and HBV infection is considered the most severe form of chronic viral hepatitis rapidly leading to towards liver-related death and cancer. Prevention and control of HDV infection requires prevention of HBV transmission through Hepatitis B immunisation, blood safety, injection safety, and harm reduction services. Hepatitis B immunisation does not provide protection against HDV for those already HBV infected. Talk to your doctor about the Hepatitis B vaccine.

**Hepatitis E:** Hepatitis E is a liver disease caused by infection with Hepatitis E virus (HEV) there were an estimated 19.47 million cases of acute hepatitis E (AHE) globally in 2021. The Hepatitis E virus is transmitted through the faecal-oral route due to faecal contamination of drinking water and in less common cases ingestion of undercooked meat/ meat products from infected animals. Those infected may experience mild fever, reduced appetite, nausea, and vomiting, which lasts a few days, abdominal pain, itching, skin rash, or joint pain lasting from 1-6 weeks. Bed rest and replacement of lost fluids and avoiding unnecessary medications are advised for those infected with Hepatitis E. In rare cases, acute Hepatitis E can be severe and results in fulminant Hepatitis (acute liver failure), and risk of death. Pregnant women with Hepatitis E, particularly those in the second or third trimester, are at an increased risk of acute liver failure, foetal loss, and mortality. If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor about your Hepatitis E risk.

Our World Hepatitis Day Health  
Information Brochure is now  
available on our website.

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