



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Hepatitis Prevention

World Hepatitis Day – July 28, 2017

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Latoya Simmons] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Latoya Simmons, filling in for your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling.

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that's usually caused by a virus. It can result in chronic illness and even death.

Dr. Francisco Averhoff is a researcher with CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis. He's joining us today to discuss hepatitis. Welcome to the show, Dr. Averhoff.

[Dr. Averhoff] Thank you very much.

[Latoya Simmons] Dr. Averhoff, tell us a little about hepatitis.

[Dr. Averhoff] Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, most commonly caused by five different viruses—A, B, C, D, and E.

[Latoya Simmons] How common is hepatitis in the U.S.?

[Dr. Averhoff] Well, in the U.S., hepatitis is a lot less common than it used to be. Right now, we primarily have to worry about hepatitis A among international travelers, and hepatitis B and C is primarily a problem among people who use injection drugs.

[Latoya Simmons] How do people get hepatitis?

[Dr. Averhoff] Well, that depends. Hepatitis A is the biggest problem among international travelers, where hepatitis B and C are transmitted through blood and body fluids. The greatest risk in the United States is really among people who inject drugs.

[Latoya Simmons] What are the most common symptoms of hepatitis?

[Dr. Averhoff] When we think of hepatitis, we often think of yellowing of the eyes and skin. However, some of the most severe forms of hepatitis—B and C—can have no symptoms, but later on cause cirrhosis and even lead to liver cancer.

[Latoya Simmons] How can we protect ourselves from getting hepatitis?

[Dr. Averhoff] Well, fortunately, there are vaccines to prevent hepatitis A and B. And international travelers should always practice good hygiene to prevent hepatitis A and hepatitis E. Hepatitis B and C are transmitted through blood and body fluids. In the United States, people who inject drugs are at greatest risk. Some states do have programs that can help injection drug users protect themselves from hepatitis.

[Latoya Simmons] How is hepatitis treated?

[Dr. Averhoff] Hepatitis A and E go away on their own. For hepatitis B and C, there are antiviral medications to treat the infection. People born between 1945 and 1965 in the United States are at particular risk for hepatitis C and should ask their doctor to be tested.

[Latoya Simmons] Where can listeners get more information about hepatitis?

[Dr. Averhoff] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/hepatitis.

[Latoya Simmons] Thanks, Dr. Averhoff. I've been talking today with Dr. Francisco Averhoff about hepatitis. People born in the U.S. between 1945 and 1965 should be tested for hepatitis C. Make an appointment with your health care provider and ask about *your* risk, and about vaccination for hepatitis A and B.

Until next time, be well. This is Latoya Simmons for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.