

## Media Inquiries:

Don Bolger  
Public Information Officer  
☎ (630) 221-7374

## DuPage County Board of Health

Sam Tornatore, J.D.  
President  
Lanny Wilson, M.D.  
Vice President  
Robert Spadoni, J.D.  
Secretary  
John Novak  
Treasurer  
Lori Bottoms  
Melinda Finch  
Nadeem N. Hussain, M.D.  
Robert Larsen, J.D.  
Uzma Muneer, M.D.  
Lawrence J. Schouten, M.D.  
Charlie A. Thurston  
James P. Weeks, D.D.S.  
Karen Ayala, M.P.H.  
Executive Director

Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

May 17, 2019

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **May is Hepatitis Awareness Month. Help Stop the Spread of Hepatitis.**

**DUPAGE COUNTY**—May is Hepatitis Awareness Month and May 19 is national Hepatitis Testing Day in the United States. The DuPage County Health Department is working to raise awareness of viral hepatitis and encourage appropriate prevention, screening, testing, and treatment. Many forms of hepatitis are preventable and can be treated, or cured, if detected early.

Millions of Americans have chronic viral hepatitis and most of them do not know they are infected. Hepatitis Testing Day is an opportunity to remind health care providers and the public the importance of being tested for viral hepatitis.

The word ‘hepatitis’ means inflammation of the liver. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected. Heavy alcohol use, toxins, some medications, and certain medical conditions can cause hepatitis, but oftentimes it is a virus that is responsible. In the United States, the most common hepatitis viruses are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

Hepatitis A is easily prevented with a safe and effective vaccine. In recent years, widespread outbreaks of hepatitis A have been occurring across the U.S. The hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for all infants at birth and adults at risk, but many people were infected before the vaccine was widely available. Finally, while there is currently no vaccine against hepatitis C, treatments are available that can cure hepatitis C. As little as one pill a day can cure hepatitis C within 8 to 12 weeks.

#### Four Things You Should Know About Viral Hepatitis:

1. Hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C are all different diseases. Each type of hepatitis is caused by a different virus and spread in different ways. Hepatitis A does not cause a long-term infection, although it can make people very sick. Hepatitis B and hepatitis C can become chronic, life-long infections and lead to serious health problems.

**-More-**



2. Chronic hepatitis is a leading cause of liver cancer.  
Chronic hepatitis B and C can cause serious damage to the liver, including liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer. In fact, more than 60 percent of liver cancer cases are related to hepatitis B or C.
3. Most people with chronic hepatitis do not know they are infected.  
There are an estimated 2.4 million people living with hepatitis C and 862,000 people living with hepatitis B in the United States, but most do not know they are infected. Many people live with chronic hepatitis for decades without symptoms or feeling sick.
4. Getting tested could save your life.  
Lifesaving treatments for chronic hepatitis B can slow down liver damage and new treatments are available that can cure hepatitis C. Still, getting tested is the only way to know if you are infected.

To better understand your risk for hepatitis, take this five-minute online assessment developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which provides a personalized report on hepatitis testing and vaccination recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/riskassessment/index.htm>

###