

Public Service Announcement

World Hepatitis Day 2024

Start Date: July 24, 2024 End Date: July 28, 2024 Nunavut-wide

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World Hepatitis Day is observed annually on July 28 to raise awareness about viral hepatitis, promote prevention, encourage testing, and develop strategies to combat the virus, aiming to identify millions unknowingly affected. The Department of Health would like to take this opportunity to encourage Nunavummiut to take action by getting tested, treated, and vaccinated to save lives, reduce new infections, and improve the well-being of their community.

Hepatitis causes inflammation of the liver and, if left untreated, destroys healthy liver cells. Symptoms of hepatitis often go unnoticed but may include:

- Nausea and/or vomiting.
- Decreased appetite.
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes).
- Rash and/or itching.
- Dark-colored urine.
- Flu-like symptoms like fatigue or fever.

In Canada, the three most common types of viral hepatitis are A, B, and C. Hepatitis A spreads through contaminated food, water, or contact with infected feces. Prevent infection by washing hands after using the washroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food, and by following safe food practices.

Hepatitis B and C can be passed through:

- Unprotected oral, anal, or vaginal sex.
- Shared drug equipment such as needles or syringes.
- Unsterilized tattoo or body piercing equipment.
- Blood-to-blood contact.

- Sharing a household.
- Pregnant individual to baby during childbirth.

You can prevent the spread of hepatitis and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by:

- Using condoms or barriers. Condoms, dental dams, and lubricants are free at health centres and other community locations in Nunavut.
- Getting tested regularly for STI's before having sex with a new partner(s). Get tested if you or your partner(s) have sex with someone other than each other. Get tested even if you have used condoms.

If you or someone in your household has symptoms, visit your local health centre for testing and vaccinations. For more information on sexual health, speak to your local health provider or visit the <u>I Respect Myself website</u>.

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