

JULY 2016 HEALTH TALK

TOPIC: HEPATITIS A

INTRODUCTION

This is the viral inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis A is a type of hepatitis; other types include Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Hepatitis D and Hepatitis E etc.

EPIDEMOLOGY

Hepatitis A is the most common type of viral hepatitis occurring worldwide with 1.4 million cases yearly. It is usually seasonal, affects both adult and children, but symptoms are more severe in adults.

Spread is usually by injection of contaminated food and untreated water (faecal-oral route). Over-crowding and poor sanitization also facilitate spread.

PRESENTATION

- Nausea (Urge to vomit)
- Anorexia (poor appetite)
- Jaundice (yellowish discoloration of the eyes)
- Dark urine
- Pale stools
- Enlarged spleen
- Enlarged liver
- Transient rash
- It last from a few weeks to several months.

It is important to note that Hepatitis A infection is a relatively mild type of Hepatitis and mortality (death) rate from it is usually low.

TREATMENT

Some laboratory investigation may be carried out, but there is usually no treatment.

Rest and dietary measure are recommended (monthly supportive treatment for symptoms)

PREVENTION

Good hygiene/sanitary conditions. It is advisable to boil water for at list ten (10) minutes as hepatitis A is resistant to chlorination.

Effective vaccine is available.

HEPATITIS B

INTRODUCTION

Transmission and chronic infection is the same for Hepatitis B as Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis B is 50-100 times more infectious than HIV.

The older an individual is, the less likely acute Hepatitis B will turn M/J chronic Hepatitis B.

Vaccines are available.

HIV (HUMAN IMMUNE DEFICIENCY VIRUS)

- Having a Sexual Transmitted Infection (STI) increase the risk for contracting HIV.
- There is no vaccine or cure for HIV.
- HIV can lead to AIDS.
- Those infected with HIV may remain symptom free for years.
- If you think you have been infected with HIV, get tested.
- Anonymous testing; your name will not be recorded.
- Confidential testing; your name will be recorded but in confidentiality.
- Get tested in another 3-6 months as there is a window period during which the virus is sometimes undetectable in the blood.
- There are multiple drug treatments that can treat HIV/AIDS symptoms.

PREVENTION OF HEPATITIS B, C AND HIV

- Never share needle and always use clean sterile syringes.
- Use a male condom during all sexual acts.

HEPATITIS C FACTS

- The hepatitis C virus lasts for up to four (4) days outside the body. It's very infectious.
- No vaccine is available.
- Once infected, someone can be infected again, antibodies are not protective.
- Usually no symptoms

HOW IS HEPATITIS C SPREAD

- Regular contact with blood - i.e sharing needles for drug use, tattooing, piercing.
- Unprotected sex with an infected individual.
- Mother to child before or during birth.
- Sharing razors, clippers and tooth brushes with blood on them (less common).

ONCE INFECTED WITH HEPATITIS C

- Acute hepatitis C infection typically leads to chronic (lifetime) hepatitis C infection.
- Can lead to liver cancer or liver scarring (cirrhosis).
- Many injections, drug users have been exposed sometimes in their life.
- Treatment is typically a two drug (interferon and Ribaririn combination)
- Hepatitis C cannot be cured.
- Aim of treatment is to improve survival (life).