



Hepatitis A-B-C-D-E and Mental Health

A quick guide for behavioral health professionals



Did you know that there is a close connection between Hepatitis and clients receiving mental health services?

People with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) are at high risk for developing Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C because of their frequent involvement with high risk activities that transmit diseases through blood.

Compared to the average citizen, substance abusing individuals put themselves at more risk for Hepatitis B and C. This is mostly because of the methods they use to get high. For example, when injecting drugs, infection can occur during blood to blood transmission in shared injection devices. It can also occur via blood in nasal mucus contaminating drug inhalation equipment (i.e. straws and rolled bills).

Additionally, the impacted judgment of individuals using recreational or prescribed drugs puts them at greater risk for unsafe sexual behaviors that can lead to the contraction of Hepatitis and other sexually transmitted infections.

Hepatitis and Mental Health Facts

- Everyone is at risk for some form of Hepatitis.
- Substance abusers are at higher risk for Hepatitis because of the nature of the diseases.
- **1 in 12 people worldwide have some form of Hepatitis.**

When discussing Hepatitis with your clients/patients:

- Be open and honest about Hepatitis, don't sugar-coat your approach.
- Focus on proactive health measures. Screen patients for Hepatitis B and C – Remind patients that “Knowing their Hepatitis status can empower them to make more effective long-term quality of life decisions.”
- Vaccination for Hepatitis A and B helps protect individuals, their significant others and their community from serious life-threatening infections.
- Hepatitis risk evaluation should be part of your routine annual health care activities.
- Emphasize the following with your patients:
 - If you eat in a restaurant, you are at risk for Hepatitis A.
 - If you and your partner are not monogamous, you are at risk for Hepatitis A, B and C.
 - Alcohol and other drug uses negatively impact your liver health.
 - **You only have one liver, you need to take care of it and love it!**

Tips for motivating and educating your patients on the prevention of Hepatitis transmission

The 5-A framework utilizes screening for Hepatitis, along with counseling to help patients introduce healthy behavioral changes related to Hepatitis that are realistic and sustainable.

Assess a patient's risk by discussing Hepatitis and past and present lifestyle. Focus on each patient's unique history and factors that affect chosen behaviors.

Advise the patient about testing and Hepatitis A/B vaccination.

Agree with the patient on specific lifestyle changes/personal goals that can be realistically accomplished that will help prevent acquiring or spreading Hepatitis infection.

Assist the patient in reaching personal goals by providing education and resources.

Arrange for patient to access additional support services or resources and follow up to monitor diagnosed Hepatitis conditions.

U.S. Common Hepatitis Types

Brief Summary

Hepatitis A is an acute liver disease caused by the Hepatitis A virus (HAV). It lasts from a few weeks to several months. It does not lead to chronic infection.

Transmission: Ingestion of fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts; from close person-to-person contact or ingestion of contaminated food or drinks.

Vaccination: Recommended for all children at age 1, illegal drug users, and anyone traveling to places, or in contact with people or animals with the virus.

Hepatitis B is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). It ranges in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks (acute) to a serious long-term (chronic) illness that can lead to liver disease or liver cancer.

Transmission: Contact with infectious blood, semen, and other body fluids from having sex with an infected person; sharing contaminated needles to inject drugs; from an infected mother to her newborn.

Vaccination: Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for all infants, older children and adolescents who were not vaccinated previously, and adults at risk for HBV infection.

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). It sometimes results in an acute illness, but most often becomes a chronic condition that can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer.

Transmission: Contact with the blood of an infected person, primarily through sharing contaminated needles to inject drugs or homemade tattoos.

Vaccination: There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis D is a serious liver disease caused by the Hepatitis D virus (HDV) and relies on HBV to replicate. It is uncommon in the United States.

Transmission: Contact with infectious blood, similar to how HBV is spread.

Vaccination: There is no vaccine for Hepatitis D (but if you are vaccinated and protected for Hepatitis B you are less likely to contract it).

Hepatitis E is a serious liver disease caused by the Hepatitis E virus (HEV) that usually results in an acute infection. It does not lead to a chronic infection. While rare in the United States, Hepatitis E is common in many parts of the world.

Transmission: Ingestion of fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts; outbreaks are usually associated with contaminated water supply in countries with poor sanitation.

Vaccination: There is currently no FDA-approved vaccine for Hepatitis E.

Online Guidelines and Recommendations

Information and materials for download:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm>

Updated Hepatitis A Post-exposure Prophylaxis and Traveler Vaccination Recommendations

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5641a3.htm>

Prevention of Hepatitis A Through Active or Passive Immunization: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5507a1.htm>

Sexually Transmitted Diseases Treatment Guidelines

<http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/default.htm> Chapter on Hepatitis A
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/treatment/2006/hepatitis-a.htm>

Notice To Readers: FDA Approval of VAQTA® (Hepatitis A Vaccine, Inactivated) for Children Aged >1 Year

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5440a7.htm>

Notice To Readers: FDA Approval of Havrix® (Hepatitis A Vaccine, Inactivated) for Persons Aged 1–18 Years

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5448a4.htm>

Diagnosis and Management of Food borne Illnesses: A Primer for Physicians and Other Health Care Professionals

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5304a1.htm>

World Hepatitis Day is May 19, 2010

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Division of Behavioral Health Services

Billing for health education:
To bill for services and time associated with Hepatitis education please use code **H00025** "Health education/health promotion"