

# Eliminate hepatitis

STAR HEALTH DESK

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. The condition can be self-limiting or can progress to fibrosis (scarring), cirrhosis or liver cancer. Hepatitis viruses are the most common cause of hepatitis in the world but other infections, toxic substances (e.g. alcohol, certain drugs), and autoimmune diseases can also cause hepatitis.

There are 5 main hepatitis viruses, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E. These 5 types are of greatest concern because of the burden of illness and death they cause and the potential for outbreaks and epidemic spread. In particular, types B and C lead to chronic disease in hundreds of millions of people and, together, are the most common cause of liver cirrhosis and cancer.

New World Health Organisation (WHO) data from 28 countries — representing approximately 70% of the global hepatitis burden — indicate that efforts to eliminate hepatitis are gaining momentum. The data reveal that nearly all 28 countries have established high-level national hepatitis elimination committees (with plans and targets for place) and more than half have allocated dedicated funding for hepatitis responses.

From commitment to action — It is encouraging to see countries turning commitment into action



to tackle hepatitis," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. In 2016, the World Health Assembly endorsed WHO's 577 global health sectors strategy on viral hepatitis to help countries scale up their responses.

The new WHO data show that more than 86% of countries reviewed have set national hepatitis elimination targets and more than 70% have begun to develop national hepatitis plans to enable

access to hepatitis care services, diagnosis, treatment and care services.

Viral hepatitis affected 325 million people worldwide in 2015, with 257 million people living with hepatitis B and 71 million people living with hepatitis C. The two main killers of the five types of hepatitis, Viral hepatitis caused 1.34 million deaths in 2015 — a figure close to the number of TB deaths and exceeding deaths linked to HIV.

**Improving injection safety and infection prevention to reduce new cases of hepatitis B and C**

Use of contaminated injection equipment in health-care settings accounts for a large number of new HCV and HBV infections worldwide, making injection safety an important strategy. Others include preventing transmission through invasive procedures, such as surgery and denture care; increasing hepatitis B vaccination rates and scaling up harm reduction programmes for people who inject drugs.

in some countries (primarily in some high-burden, low-and lower middle income countries), facilitated by the introduction of generic versions of these medicines. The list of DAAs available to countries for treating hepatitis C is growing. WHO has just prequalified the first generic version of one of these drugs: sofosbuvir.

**HCV B treatment**

With high morbidity and mortality globally, there is great interest also in the development of new therapies for chronic hepatitis B virus infection. The most effective current hepatitis B treatment, tenofovir, (which is not curative and which in most cases needs to be taken for life), is available for as low as US\$ 48 per year in many low and middle income countries. There is also an urgent need to scale up access to hepatitis B testing.

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HAVE A NICE DAY

## 3 health dangers that your New Millennium Kid may face



It is not easy being a parent of a generation born during and after 2000. They have grown up with the Internet, social media, the rise of different forms of terrorism and hate-crime. As these teenagers approach adulthood, against the quickly changing political backdrop, how will they shape the future? According to The World Economic Forum (Global Risks Report 2017), technological innovation, particularly of the fast-paced kind we see today, is full of possible benefits but also burdened with high risk. Today we all started realising that with the joys of parenthood comes a crowd of worries very quickly, unlike before. Here is a brief summary of 3 very difficult trends, that your teen may be exposed. And, how happy is this generation related to physical and mental health?

**1. Internet safety:** The Internet is fun and informative, but becoming less safe place as well. Its addiction is dangerous like drug dependence. Scientists warned that parents may not truly understand social media use. The parents are also urged to monitor potential problems with cyber-bullying, Facebook depression and exposure to unsuitable content. Time has come to rethink about the value of time, friendship, and relationships.

Tech use at night is most dangerous. Most of us, we do not know what our kids are doing in their bedrooms at night! It is likely they are texting their friends or chatting on Facebook. The high-tech bedrooms of many teenagers are anything but dark and quiet. They often go to sleep listening to their iPods, and in fact, text messages late into the night. In exchange, this seems to be today's teenage behaviour. No wonder they are tired in school and travelling. Well, you need to encourage your child to make it a habit to completely unplug well before bedtime.

**2. Lifestyle:** Obesity and related illnesses is a major problem. These problems have tripled in the last 15-20 years, putting many children at risk for diabetes and heart disease. Overweight and obese children are also likely to experience a lowered quality of life, an increased likelihood of contracting several serious disorders and a potential reduction in life expectancy.

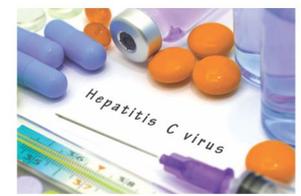
There are numerous approaches to treat. Learning to avoid fast food/outside meal (with strict guidelines) and incorporate physical activity into daily life can help the whole family. Rather than spending hours surfing the Web, encourage your child to get involved in hobbies, indoor/outdoor sports or other extracurricular activities. Interestingly, some studies have found that more than 12 percent children between the age of 6 and 19 years have measurable noise induced hearing loss in one or both ears. Exposure to harmful sounds can injure the delicate hair cells in the inner ear. We have a fixed number of cochlear hair cells and they do not regenerate, so it is important to prevent damage to the first place to reduce the need for a hearing aid later in life. To protect their hearing, they should turn down the volume from headsets, televisions and set the top volume level on their player to a safe level.

**3. Lack of physical activities and stress:** Sedentary lifestyles have become the norm in our region, with children spending more time in front of the TV, computer or video game console than reading books, playing outside or engaging in extracurricular activities. A new study conducted by Columbia University, reported that high-stress teens are twice as likely as low-stress teens to smoke, drink and use illegal drugs.

Your children can learn to keep stress under control by taking good care of themselves (e.g., getting enough sleep at night, eating a healthy diet and exercise every day). It may also be helpful to learn relaxation techniques, find outlets for recreation, and build a support group of friends.

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## HEALTH bulletin



## Urban Health Department must be strengthened

DHIRAJ KUMAR NATHI

Very recently city dwellers of Dhaka were in great crisis and had to pay enough money out of their own pocket to get recovery from a viral disease — Chikungunya. For the last few months, public at large of Dhaka North and South City Corporation were severely affected by chikungunya so adversely that turned to be an epidemic and the High Court of Judicature at Dhaka had to issue a rule nisi to make authorities responsible and brought to the book for their indifference.

Due to chikungunya, huge numbers of city dwellers were sick with high fever, muscle pains, headache, nausea, fatigue, rash and total debilitating joint pains making a patient totally incapable of discharging his normal duties. Initially, city health department did not come out with mosquito killing or opening emergency outlets and arranging any media campaign to make the public aware of getting remedy from such debacle.

The health department is fully aware that *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito is the carrier of both chikungunya and dengue haemorrhagic fever but did not take adequate step to control them by larviciding and fogging at least to demonstrate their good wishes and build awareness among city dwellers.

Social media started to highly accuse the mayors, health department and the government to become so concerned of public health. Municipal council developed to look after the health of city dwellers with sanitation and solid waste management and provide lighting and road safety of city dwellers.



These are distinct and visible areas of our weakness in urban health care delivery system although we propagate about our capability to overcome any challenge and emerge as role model. Government health departments and city health units are not prepared enough to make any rapid response to tackle or deliver remedies quickly to people until they spend enough money from their own pocket.

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) failed to issue any public alertness about such vector borne

diseases and they are not serious about water borne diseases to give advises to city health departments and public at large. Of late, IEDCR in a newsletter stated that 519 cases were detected in their laboratory and 30 to 35 people contacted this disease every day.

Local Government Division with its 11 city corporations and 327 municipalities must take steps to make their urban local bodies capable of responding rapidly by strengthening their health departments with sufficient skilled manpower and budget allocations for public health and primary health care so that they can discharge their responsibilities as provided under the Local Government Act, 2009.

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## Massively discounted hepatitis C drugs are not being bought

No developing countries have so far come forward to buy massively discounted hepatitis C drugs to treat their populations. The Global Procurement Fund, created this year to provide discontinued medications by the Centre for Disease Analysis Foundation (CDAF), Louisville, CO, USA, has appealed on this World Hepatitis Day on July 28, 2017 for countries to step up to mark and commit to buying these life-saving drugs.

Some 70 million people worldwide have chronic hepatitis C infection, which if left untreated can cause extensive liver damage, cancer and death. Since their introduction in 2014, directly acting antiviral (DAA) drugs have transformed the hepatitis C landscape. A disease which previously required long-term treatment with interferon-based regimens (with ghastly side effects and no guarantee of cure) can now be cured with a short course of oral DAAs with few or no side effects.

However, much of this breakthrough has been overshadowed by the debate around the prices of these therapies.

## Breastfeed: Give the Gift of a Lifetime to Your Baby

Why is Breastfeeding Important for your Baby?

Breast milk helps keep your baby healthy.

- It supplies all the necessary nutrients in the proper proportions.
- It protects against allergies, sickness and obesity.
- It protects against diseases, like diabetes and cancer.
- It protects against infections, like ear infections.
- It is easily digested—no constipation, diarrhea or upset stomach.
- Babies have healthier weights as they grow.
- Breastfed babies score higher on IQ tests.

## Breast milk changes constantly to meet babies' needs.

The milk changes in volume and composition according to the time of day, nursing frequency, and age of baby to promote healthy growth. Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby.

## Breast milk is always ready and good for the environment.

- It is available wherever and whenever your baby needs it.
- It is always at the right temperature, clean and free.
- No bottles to clean.
- Breastfeeding has no waste, so it is good for the environment.

## Why is Breastfeeding Important for You?

- Mothers who breastfeed:
  - Have a reduced risk of Type 2 Diabetes and certain cancers such as breast cancer
  - May find it easier to return to what they weighed before they got pregnant
  - Strengthen the bond with their children

