

BELIEVE IN THE CURE
BI-CYCLING TOUR
Hepatitis B Foundation

June 2 – 23, 2008

Pensacola, FL to Philadelphia, PA

Sponsored By:



Hepatitis B Foundation
3805 Old Easton Road
Doylestown, PA 18902
(215) 489-4900 www.hepb.org



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Teenager Embarks on “Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour” to Raise Awareness about Hepatitis B *(Celebrating the Power of One to Make a Difference)*

DOYLESTOWN, PA (June 2008) – The power of one individual to make a difference cannot be measured in words, but in actions. John Ellis, a 17-year-old from Pensacola, Fla., was diagnosed with hepatitis B in 2006. Instead of being discouraged by this devastating medical diagnosis, John turned the news into an opportunity to raise awareness about hepatitis B. With a passion for cycling and a desire to help raise funds to find a cure for the disease, John contacted the Hepatitis B Foundation (www.hepb.org) with an idea to organize an East Coast cycling tour. Today, John’s idea has become a reality! The Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour, sponsored by the Hepatitis B Foundation, is a 1,100 mile journey beginning on June 2 at John’s high school in Pensacola and ending in Philadelphia on June 23 – John’s 18th birthday!

John Ellis is an extraordinary young man. He was a healthy teenager, when the results of a routine blood test revealed that he had hepatitis B. This news came just two weeks before his 16th birthday and John recalls emotions of, “being incredibly scared because I didn’t know what having hepatitis B would mean for me.” His fear was further fueled by his doctor who told him that he would eventually need a liver transplant. John’s world was turned upside down. He was frightened and also confused as to how he could have contracted this potentially fatal disease because he had received the hepatitis B vaccine in middle school.

John turned to the Hepatitis B Foundation to learn more about his disease. The Foundation is the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to finding a cure and improving the quality of life for those affected with hepatitis B worldwide. Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection in the world. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) that attacks liver cells and can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer. The virus is transmitted through infected blood. In the U.S., 1 out of 20 persons (or 12 million Americans) have been infected with HBV.

Armed with information about hepatitis B and with a conviction to improve his health, John gave up a junk food diet and began exercising. He purchased a \$50 bike from a local bike store and started riding it everywhere – to school, to work and just for fun. “I knew I wanted to ride for a cause. People need to become more aware about hepatitis B and how it affects us,” said John.

John has shown us courage in the truest sense of the word. He is approaching his chronic hepatitis B diagnosis with a positive attitude and embarking on this cycling tour to prove to himself that he can overcome obstacles placed in his path. Knowing that there is no cure for hepatitis B does not dampen his spirits. “If I believe in my heart that things will work out for the best, then who’s to say I’m not cured,” said John.

Sponsors of the Cycling Tour include NutriSystem, C.P. Commercial Printing, Monster Graphics, Bikes Plus (Pensacola, Fla.), Fox Rothschild LLP, High Swartz LLP, Newman’s Own Organics, Clif Bars, and Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

For more on the Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour and a blog following John’s journey, visit the Hepatitis B Foundation at www.hepb.org or contact 215-489-4900.



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John Ellis Backgrounder

*12 million people live right here in the United States with Hepatitis B.
My name is John Ellis and I am one of those people.*

Two weeks before my 16th birthday in June 2006, I was diagnosed with hepatitis B. Initially, I was incredibly scared simply because I didn't know what having hepatitis B would mean for me. My doctor told me I would eventually need a liver transplant. But I was confused. I had received the vaccine in middle school, and I didn't think that something like this could happen to me.



To be honest, I knew nothing about hepatitis B. However, contracting hepatitis B forced me to come to grips with many difficulties that most teens never have to imagine. But I am not alone.

In the search for a way to improve my health, I came across a \$50 dollar bike at a local cycling store. I started riding my bike everywhere - to school, to work, and for fun. Inspired by the love of riding, I had an epiphany:

I knew that I wanted to ride for a cause. People need to become more aware about hepatitis B and how it affects us.

I contacted the Hepatitis B Foundation and after flying up with my mom to Pennsylvania to meet them personally, I decided to embark on a cycling tour from my hometown of Pensacola, FL., to Philadelphia, PA., where the Foundation is located.

Often times, when people get sick, the hardest part is believing that things are going to get better. With this 1,100-plus mile cycling trip, I hope to raise awareness about hepatitis B. But more personally, I hope to prove to myself that I can overcome the obstacles placed in my path.

“So even though there is still no complete cure for hepatitis B, if I believe in my heart that things will work out for the best, then who's to say I'm not cured?”

With all of your support, we can together raise awareness about hepatitis B and help find a cure.

Please join me in the “Believe in the Cure” Cycling Tour to benefit the Hepatitis B Foundation!





Facts About John Ellis

Q: How have you been training for the Cycling Tour? Do you follow a special diet?

A: I have gone on a few overnight trips; commuting at least 10 miles per day on my bike, more on the weekends. I eat Clif Bars and am “carbing up.” Carbohydrates are supposed to be a good source of energy for cyclists so I will eat a lot of carbs before doing a big ride. I am very health conscious when it comes to my diet – no fast food! I eat plenty of fruits and vegetables and drink lots of water.

Q: Describe your personality?

A: I’m laid back and easy going.

Q: Do you participate in any extracurricular activities in high school?

A: I play the tenor saxophone for Tate High School Jazz Band. I enjoy jamming with friends on weekends; we play blues music. I also participate in Teen Trend Setter, an after school mentoring program that helps elementary school children with their reading skills.

Q: What are your favorite classes in school?

A: English and History.

Q: What are your favorite sports?

A: Baseball – I played for nine years. I’ve always wanted to play lacrosse but it isn’t a big sport here in Pensacola.

Q: What are your favorite food(s)?

A: Japanese and Greek cuisine.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: Reading, writing, listening and playing music with my friends.

Q: What are your plans after high school (e.g., college, work, combination)? Please provide details.

A: After the Cycling Tour this summer, I am planning on working with WWOOF. This stands for World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. I do not know where I will be stationed yet. They give you a place to stay and they feed you. In exchange, I will be working for them. In the fall, I am looking to finish up my Associates Degree most likely with a focus in business at Pensacola Junior College. After that, I will transfer to a four year college.

Q: What would you like to accomplish in your life?

A: I want people to look at me and say I am a happy, go-lucky person. I want to make other people happy through this Cycling Tour and by showing them that they can overcome obstacles and be bigger than their diagnosis. For my life in general, I want people to be able to say that I made them a happier person by just knowing me.





Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour Backgrounder

EVENT: *Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour 2008*
SPONSOR: Hepatitis B Foundation
DATE: June 2 – 23, 2008
GOAL: To raise awareness about hepatitis B, particularly among teens and young adults, to spread a message of hope that it is preventable and treatable, and to raise funds for the Hepatitis B Foundation.

SUMMARY: “Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour” is the result of a young man’s dream to take a devastating medical diagnosis and turn it into an opportunity to raise awareness about hepatitis B and to help save lives. In 2006, John Ellis was diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B at the age of 16. Frightened and confused, he was told that he could die from the disease and would probably need a liver transplant. With the goal of trying to improve his health, John bought a \$50 bike and started riding everywhere – to school, work and for fun. His passion for biking grew and one day while riding, he realized he wanted to ride for a cause – to help prevent other young people from being infected with this deadly virus and to spread a message of hope.

In the fall of 2007, John contacted the Hepatitis B Foundation to share his idea about riding to raise awareness and to help raise funds to find a cure. John shared how when people get sick, the hardest part is believing that things are going to get better. With the “Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour,” John wants to prove to himself that he can overcome the obstacles placed in his path and let others affected by hepatitis B know that there is reason to hope through healthy living and the availability of promising new treatments.

TOUR ROUTE: “Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour” will follow the 1,100 mile Atlantic Coast Trail that will begin with a kick-off media event in Pensacola, FL. During the three week tour, a chase van will follow John throughout the entire trip to ensure his safety and health, and Foundation staff will be actively involved in the planning and logistical support for this event. Daily blogs and media stops held at strategic locations throughout the Tour will be used to promote interest in John’s story and achieve disease awareness goals. A celebratory media event in Philadelphia will conclude the Tour on June 23, the day of John’s 18th birthday. (See map of the Tour Route below)

GENERAL TOUR TIMELINE:

Monday, June 2 at 10 AM – J.M. Tate High School, Pensacola, FL., Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour Kick-Off Event

Monday, June 23 at 10 AM – Lloyd Hall, Kelly Drive, Philadelphia, PA., Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour Conclusion Event



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[Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour Backgrounder, Continued]

TOUR SUPPORTERS:

Major Sponsors

- NutriSystem
- Monster Graphics
- C.P. Commercial Printing

Supporting Sponsors

- Bikes Plus (Pensacola, Fla.)
- Fox Rothschild LLP
- High Swartz LLP
- Newman's Own Organics

BELIEVE IN THE CYCLING TOUR ROUTE:



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Hepatitis B Fact Sheet

What is Hepatitis B? Hepatitis B is the world's most common serious liver infection. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV) that attacks liver cells and can lead to cirrhosis, liver failure, and liver cancer. The virus is transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids. HBV is 100 times more infectious than the HIV/AIDS virus. Yet, hepatitis B can be prevented with a safe and effective vaccine. Unfortunately, for those who are chronically infected with HBV, the vaccine is too late. There are, however, promising new treatments for HBV.

How many people are affected by hepatitis B?

In the World

- 2 billion people have been infected with HBV (1 out of 3 persons)
- 10 to 30 million people will become infected with HBV each year
- 400 million people worldwide are chronically infected with HBV
- 1 million people die each year from the complications of chronic HBV

In the United States

- 12 million Americans have been infected with HBV (1 out of 20 persons)
- Up to 100,000 new people will become infected with HBV each year
- Up to 2 million Americans are chronically infected with HBV
- 5,000 Americans die each year from the complications of chronic HBV

How is hepatitis B transmitted? The hepatitis B virus is transmitted through infected blood, unprotected sex, illicit drug use, and from an infected woman to her newborn during pregnancy or delivery. Most Americans are infected with HBV through sexual transmission. Outside the U.S., the most common route of transmission is from an infected woman to her newborn baby. Hepatitis B **cannot** be spread through casual contact such as hugging, shaking hands, coughing, sneezing, or eating food prepared by an infected person.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis B? Hepatitis B is known as the "silent disease" because most people who are infected do not have any symptoms, or if they do, mistake them for the flu. Otherwise, symptoms can range from nausea and fatigue to more serious ones such as jaundice (yellowed eyes and skin) and dark urine.

What is chronic hepatitis B? If a person tests positive for the hepatitis B virus for more than six months, they are diagnosed as having a "chronic" hepatitis B infection. The risk of developing a chronic infection is inversely proportional to their age. The younger one is, the greater the risk of developing a chronic HBV infection. That is, while 10% of adults will become chronically infected, **up to 50%** of young children and **90%** of infants will become chronically infected. In the U.S., it is estimated that one-third of adults living with chronic hepatitis B were infected as babies or young children.



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[Hepatitis B Fact Sheet, Continued]

Who is at increased risk for hepatitis B?

- Babies born to mothers who are infected with HBV
- Close household contacts with an infected person
- Children adopted from a country where HBV is prevalent
- Sexually active teens or adults who have had multiple partners or unprotected sex
- Those diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease (STD)
- Illicit drug users who share needles or other drug paraphernalia
- Healthcare or emergency providers who have contact with blood
- Patients on kidney dialysis
- Those living in an institutional setting, such as prisons or group homes

Can hepatitis B be prevented? Yes, hepatitis B can be prevented through a safe and effective vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that **all** infants and children up to 18 years of age receive the HBV vaccine. Almost all 50 states have school entry laws that require the vaccine; and many colleges are now requiring the HBV vaccine upon admission. The HBV vaccine is also recommended for all adults at risk for possible infection.

Is there a cure for hepatitis B? Although there is no cure for chronic hepatitis B, there are currently six medications that have been approved for adults with HBV (and two for children) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that either boost the immune system or slow down the virus.

- **Interferon-alpha** (Intron A) – Given by injection several times a week for six months to a year, or sometimes longer. Approved in 1991. (Adults and children)
- **Lamivudine** (Epivir-HBV) – A pill that is taken once a day for at least one year or longer. Approved in 1998. (Adults and children)
- **Adefovir dipivoxil** (Hepsera) – A pill taken once a day for at least one year or longer. Approved in 2002. (Adults)
- **Entecavir** (Baraclude) – A pill taken once a day for up to one year. Approved in 2005. (Adults)
- **Pegylated Interferon** (Pegasys) – Given by injection once a week usually for six months to a year. Approved in 2005. (Adults)
- **Telbivudine** (Tzyeka) – A pill taken once a day for up to one year. Approved in 2006. (Adults)

The approved HBV drugs provide valuable treatment options for the 400 million people who are chronically infected worldwide. In addition, there are several promising new drugs in the research pipeline that provide hope in the search for a cure. Visit the Hepatitis B Foundation website at www.hepb.org for more information about hepatitis B prevention, management and treatment.



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Hepatitis B Foundation Backgrounder

The Hepatitis B Foundation is the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to finding a cure for hepatitis B and improving the quality of life for all those affected worldwide through research, education and patient advocacy. It is committed to raising funds for focused research, promoting disease awareness, supporting immunization and treatment initiatives, and serving as the primary source of hepatitis B information for patients and their families, the medical and scientific community, and the general public.

The Hepatitis B Foundation was created in 1991 by Timothy and Joan Block, and Paul and Janine Witte, who were deeply moved by the plight of a young family affected by hepatitis B. To the dismay of these two couples, they discovered there was no place for this family to turn for support, nor was there any organization devoted to finding a cure for hepatitis B. With the personal support of Dr. Baruch Blumberg, who won the Nobel Prize for his discovery of the hepatitis B virus and creation of the first vaccine against this deadly virus in 1976, they worked tirelessly to establish the foundation.

Today, the Foundation has grown from a local grassroots effort into a professional organization with a global reach. It has become a world leader for biomedical research on hepatitis B and the promotion of innovative scientific exchange through national and international conferences, an international research exchange program, student internships, and its own research institute dedicated to drug discovery for hepatitis B as well as early detection biomarkers for primary liver cancer, the most fatal consequence of a chronic hepatitis B infection.

The Foundation also values the importance of education in fighting this deadly disease, and provides training for health care providers, publishes free newsletters and literature, helps sponsor screening and immunization programs, coordinates a speakers bureau, and assists with media campaigns to raise the profile of hepatitis B. The Foundation's website, www.hepb.org, is a major portal of information with one million visits from 135 countries each year.

In the patient advocacy arena, the Foundation provides expert testimony about hepatitis B to both state and federal legislators, organizes the only national hepatitis B patient conference each year, and supports national initiatives to advance hepatitis B as an urgent public health issue.

The success and effectiveness of the Foundation has been its partnerships with key federal agencies, academic institutions and other nonprofit organizations including the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Institute for Hepatitis and Virus Research, Drexel University College of Medicine, the University of Oxford, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Asian Liver Center of Stanford University, and more.

The Foundation's mission is to help create a future that is brighter and more hopeful for the 400 million people who live with chronic hepatitis B worldwide through its research, education and patient advocacy programs. To learn more about the Hepatitis B Foundation, visit www.hepb.org.



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