

0:05

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining today's webinar. Let's talk about Hepatitis B. My name is Evangeline Wang, and I am the Public Health Program coordinator at the Hepatitis B Foundation. I'm pleased to present with my colleagues at the Hepatitis Foundation today's webinar. Today we will learn all about Hepatitis B: who is at risk, the benefits of knowing your hepatitis B status, and how to manage hepatitis B for those living with the disease.

0:32

Before we get started, I'd like to review a few housekeeping items and let you know how you can participate in today's webinar.

0:40

Please note that all attendees are in listen only mode and will be muted during the presentation. There's also an option, and calling numbers are within the slide.

0:50

There are closed captioning services available. You can access it through the link in the chat box.

0:55

You may submit questions in writing during the presentation by typing them in the question box in your go to Webinar control panel.

1:05

We'll be reviewing them as they come in, or hold a Q and A period after the presentation.

1:12

Finally, today's webinar is being recorded. You will receive an e-mail with a link to view a recording of today's presentation.

1:22

So before we get into the presentation, I wanted to provide you with a bit of background on Hep B United Philadelphia in case you're not familiar.

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Hep B United Philadelphia is a Philadelphia based coalition established by the Hepatitis B Foundation to address and eliminate Hepatitis B in greater Philadelphia.

1:41

Hep B United Philadelphia is dedicated to reducing health disparities associated with hepatitis B, by increasing awareness, screening, vaccination, and linkage to care for high risk.

1:54

There's an estimated two million people in the United States who are chronically infected with the hepatitis B virus, and Philadelphia is home to over 25,000 individuals with hepatitis B. We would like to acknowledge our funding for today's webinar, and the National Library of Medicine.

2:11

The National Library of Medicine has great resources that might be helpful to you and your community.

2:17

Today, we wanted to share a few of these resources with you. The National Library of Medicine, or NLM, offers a number of online health information resources for different audiences, purposes.

2:30

The network of the National Library of Medicine offers training, initiatives and services for local organizations interested in using and promoting health information.

2:41

Medline Plus is an NLM resource, designed for the general public to find high quality health information. Medline Plus offers links to reliable health website, easy to read articles, and contains information about drugs and supplements.

2:58

You'll be able to find the medical encyclopedia and medical tests information.

3:04

Medline Plus is committed to providing only health information from trustworthy sources and from websites free of advertising to ensure that users only get trustworthy information. To support members of our communities who prefer to learn about their health in a different language other than English, Medline Plus contains multilingual resources, and the entire site is available in Spanish.

3:27

If you want to find hepatitis B information, you can type this into the search bar and the Medline Plus homepage. You'll get a list of results, similar to using any online search engines, except that you can see each source after each link in parentheses is from a reputable organization such as the National Library of Medicine or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

3:52

When you search using a keyword, you may see a short summary box outlined in blue at the top of your list of results. This will link you to what Medline Plus refers to, a top of page, organizes all the information on a certain topic to help get more, easily find what you want.

4:11

This will prevent you from having to scroll through all the results, to find specific information you are looking for.

4:17

You can see the hepatitis B topic page here.

4:21

You can also find a link to drug information from the Medline Plus homepage, by selecting just herbs and supplements.

4:28

You'll get easy to understand information about prescription, herbs, and supplements.

4:34

You can also find information on about medical tests, such as this page about the Hepatitis panel.

4:40

Note that this page will also connect you with other related medical tests.

4:46

Now, I'd like to introduce our presenter, Catherine Freeland, the Public Health Program Director, at the Hepatitis B Foundation, And turn it over to her, welcome, Catherine.

4:56

Thanks so much Evangeline. And thanks everyone for joining us today to really talk about hepatitis B and why it's important to get tested on today will be really covering just general facts and an overview for the community. So if you're a community partner who serves on some of the high risk populations that we'll talk about today, some of this information will be really helpful to you. I would also like to share with you that these slides will also be available for you to use in your practice in Vietnamese and Mandarin and we're also working on other languages as well.

5:29

But it's important for us to have a good understanding of what hepatitis B incidence is in our communities. Worldwide, hepatitis B is extremely common, and it's estimated that 292 million people are living with hepatitis B, and some modeling studies show that this number is even higher, at 317 million. So there's a lot of people around the world living with hepatitis B, and it's often something that we don't talk enough about. In the United States, more than 2.2 million people are living with hepatitis B. Our studies, modeling studies, have shown that about 2.2 million people in the United States are about are estimated to be living with hepatitis B, and hepatitis B is one of the most common infections, and it's one of the most common liver infections as well. So it's really important for individuals, especially if they're high risk, to understand the prevalence.

6:19

Oftentimes, at the Hepatitis B Foundation, we hear that individuals feel very isolated after a diagnosis, or don't understand a lot about it, and so we hope that some of these points that we'll cover in today's section will provide some clarity for that.

6:33

So, what areas of the world are most common for hepatitis B? This map comes from the Polaris Observatory Collaborators and it really highlights where hepatitis B is really prevalent in our world. As you can see, the areas that have dark red colors have greater than 2% prevalence in the general population. And then as you move up towards the orange colors, you have a 1.1 to 2% prevalence in the general population. So, you can see these areas are predominantly in sub Saharan Africa, the Pacific Islands, and then parts of Asia as well. All of these rates are really high, especially in some of these communities. And so it's really important that if you're serving these populations, you're telling them or asking them or probing them to get tested for hepatitis B and to encourage them to know their status.

7:24

So sharing this information and getting the information out there to these communities is really important, and we'll talk about why in just a minute.

7:32

So what is hepatitis B? Hepatitis B is a chronic long lasting virus, that infects the liver. There are many types of viral hepatitis. There's hepatitis A, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and D. And there's even a hepatitis E, and today we're really just going to focus on hepatitis B. And if it's not taking care of like other forms of hepatitis, it can lead to liver cancer. And most people, particularly in

the United States, and really, all over the world, are not aware of their hepatitis B infection. And so, they're going around living their daily lives. They're not experiencing symptoms. Most of the time people living with hepatitis B don't experience signs or symptoms of the virus and that virus is replicating in the liver. And it causes damage over time. What is good is there is a safe vaccine that's been around for about 30 years, that can prevent hepatitis B, and treatments also can help manage hepatitis B for those individuals that do have hepatitis B.

8:30

So there are tools that we have for those individuals that know their hepatitis B status or for those who may be at risk. There's vaccination and prevention measures that they can take to protect themselves against developing a hepatitis B infection.

8:47

So, it's important for us to talk about the liver and what it does. Why is this important? Because hepatitis B infects the liver. The liver is a vital organ in our body that's so important for daily function. It digests food, it regulates our energy, it helps to build muscle, breakdown our toxins, fight infection, processes medications, stores vitamins, and helps our blood to clot. So obviously, this is a super important organ and we want to make sure that we're taking care of it so we can prolong life and just live a happy, normal, healthy life.

9:21

But with hepatitis B, if it is not managed, and individuals are, as I kind of was alluding to before, walking around, unaware of their infection, hepatitis B can lead to liver damage, and even liver cancer over time. And if someone is not aware or managed for this infection, it can really lead and progress to long term liver cancer.

9:44

So you start with the healthy liver. So this is just a geographical or a graphical representation of what happens to your liver over time if you're having hepatitis B virus. You start with that nice, happy liver. And over time it can lead to mild inflammation or fibrosis, or you can have overtime progressing further to a lot of inflammation which can lead to a scarred liver or cirrhosis. Or even further, if it isn't managed, if it's really in the body for a long period of time, hepatitis B can lead to liver cancer. And so that's why it's so important, You know, liver cancer is really rising in the United States, and really, it's important. Hepatitis B is a contributor to that, and so it's really important to know your hepatitis B status. You can prevent liver cancer from happening.

10:35

So this is just another visual representation of what can happen over time with hepatitis B and what it can do to the liver. Ultimately, hepatitis B can scar the liver, and harm the liver. And if it's left, untreated hepatitis B can lead to liver damage or even liver cancer.

10:55

So, are there symptoms of hepatitis B? There are usually no signs or symptoms for most people. With hepatitis B, if someone does have symptoms, this can be a more severe sign of liver disease. And so, if someone is experiencing these types of symptoms, it's important for them to go to the doctor soon. But the symptoms that do happen in rarity are a fever, jaundice, which is yellowing of the skin and eyes, dark urine, nausea, and fatigue, for example. And so, if an individual experiences any of these types of symptoms, it's important for them to go to the doctor, and it could have something to do with their liver. It could also be other things, it's just important to keep hepatitis B in mind for, for those experiencing, these types of symptoms.

11:40

But how can you get hepatitis B You can get hepatitis B from infected blood, or it's also spread through blood to blood contact, or sexual contact, and hepatitis B is something that is extremely infectious, and it can live outside of the body for up to seven days. So it's, it's very infectious. It can spread pretty easily, and there are several things that you can do to prevent it from happening. You can clean up blood spills properly and that sort of thing, to make sure that you, as an individual, are protected.

12:14

You can get hepatitis B. Most of the time people are infected very innocently at a very young age. Many pregnant women do not know that they're infected and unknowingly transmit the virus onto their babies due to blood exchange during childbirth.

12:31

And so it's really important that all pregnant women be tested for hepatitis B during their first trimester of pregnancy and be monitored regularly. If they do have hepatitis B, there are things that you can do to prevent it from contracting to the baby. So there's different steps that you can take. Like, obviously, if a mom is found to be positive for hepatitis B, then she would need regular care. The doctors would monitor her very closely, and if her viral load becomes a certain level, they may start her on hepatitis B treatment. And then the baby within the first 24 hours of birth and this is recommended for all newborns, should receive the birth dose of hepatitis B and possibly hepatitis B immunoglobulin.

13:15

So, those ways have been shown to be really effective at preventing transmission from mom to baby of hepatitis B. So it's really important that those things are taken into place, Especially if the mom is found to be positive for hepatitis B or if the mom is positive.

13:32

So, what put someone at risk of getting hepatitis B? Having tattoos, body art, or body piercings with unsterile equipment, getting a blood transfusion or receiving a blood product before 1992, being a healthcare provider, using unsterilized needles with recreational drugs, being born to a mother with hepatitis B - so that's referring to the perinatal transmission there. That can happen. Living with someone who has hepatitis B, or being the first or second generation, coming from an area where hepatitis B is common, and this is really speaking to those individuals that are currently living in the United States.

14:10

So if you relate to any of these risk factors listed here, it's important that you know whether or not you've been tested for hepatitis B, and you know your hepatitis B status. Because there are steps that you can take to make sure that you can be, managed for your, hepatitis B, or you can get vaccinated to prevent risk of a future infection.

14:36

There are a lot of misconceptions associated with hepatitis B, and so it's important to make sure that we're clear. Hepatitis B is not spread through casual contact. These casual contacts are similar or can be characterized as hugging kissing, holding hands sneezing or sharing needles, or sharing utensil excuse me, sharing needles can spread so sharing utensils cannot spread hepatitis B. So it's important for those things to be considered. I know a lot of times, in many communities, people will feel like they need to self isolate themselves if they're

diagnosed with hepatitis B and so it's important to know that it's, that's not necessary. You can still share meals with your family, you can still hug and kiss them and hold hands. So, it's, it's not spread these ways.

15:22

So it's really important for you to know that if you have family members or friends that may be positive for hepatitis B. The good news is that liver problems can be prevented by getting tested. And the test for hepatitis B is very simple, and easy, and can help you and your family stay healthy.

15:41

So how does one find out if they have Hepatitis B? A simple blood test can check to see if you have hepatitis B. The test is quick, and easy, and results should be ready in a few days.

15:54

So what should you ask to be tested for when you're going to the doctor? The hepatitis B surface antigen HBsAg is a test. that marks whether or not an infection is happening with hepatitis B in the body currently.

16:08

If this test is positive or reactive, this means that a person is infected with hepatitis B and further testing should happen if this happens.

16:18

Hepatitis B, surface antibody, HBsAb. If this test is positive or reactive, it means that the person is protected, or immune against hepatitis B so that if this is positive, that means that the individual doesn't have to worry about hepatitis B.

16:34

The core antibody, the hepatitis B core antibody, positive, or reactive test, indicates that a person has had an infection of hepatitis B, or currently has an infection. So this test tells us whether or not a person has been exposed to hepatitis B, and so if the individual is hepatitis B surface, antibody positive, inquiry antibody positive, this means that a person has recovered from an acute infection. And that acute infection is the six month infection that happens, where the individual is able to recover from an exposure. Most of the time, adults who are exposed are able to recover about 90% of the time from the infection, whereas children are much more vulnerable. And about 90% of children who are exposed are more likely to develop a chronic and or lifelong infection. So those are important things to keep in mind. Ultimately, you need all three of these to really have a good understanding of what your hepatitis B status is.

17:28

There is a friendly table that is on the Hepatitis B Foundation website under test and other test results. That would provide a super helpful thing that you can easily print off and take to your doctor's office if you are a bit confused about what you should be asking for and what the meaning of your test results might look like.

17:45

So I encourage you to check that out, and there's a lot of other really helpful, rich resources on the website that can be really valuable for you if you're not sure what you should be tested for, what should you do after a diagnosis, or with your test results. If you have hepatitis B right now, what can you do? So if you do come back positive for the hepatitis B surface antigen, that

indicates that you have hepatitis B. So that either means that you have an acute or chronic infection. Generally, the doctor will bring you back to get tested again in six months. And after that six months has passed. I mean, if you're still positive for hepatitis B surface antigen, then you likely have a chronic infection, and will need regular monitoring every six months, at least with your doctor.

18:32

And your doctor may at some point, recommend treatment. They'll do other blood tests and check different levels, like, your viral level, to see if you do need treatment. The treatment does work to reduce the number, the virus in the body, and it can reduce damage that's occurred over time. So it's been shown to be really effective, But the key here, is knowing, if you have hepatitis B, so you can take action, and address any, sort of issues that you may have related to hepatitis B, and prevent and prolong life.

19:04

So other things that you can do, if you do have a positive hepatitis B test, surface antigen test, you can take some steps to maintain a healthy lifestyle and protect your liver health.

19:16

So these are just general tips that are recommended for anybody, and can be helpful to protect your liver health, overall. So if you have any sort of liver issues, these are general tips that are valuable. So one thing that we always recommend, for somebody who has tested positive for the hepatitis B surface antigen, is to stop drinking alcohol. Obviously, alcohol is absorbed through the liver. And so if, if it's in there, it can cause additional damage.

19:41

So another aspect is losing weight. If you're overweight maintaining a healthy, well balanced diet, exercise, and quitting smoking, all of those things, really impact the liver, and can have a great benefit for prolonging your life and preventing any sort of other complications that could arise.

20:00

So it's important again, so keynote here is as important, if you have hepatitis B, if you test positive for hepatitis B surface antigen, that you get tested every 6 to 12 months with your doctor and monitor your liver health regularly. This monitoring might include a liver ultrasound and will include blood work as well, and checking your viral levels to see if treatment might be a good option for you.

20:23

There are treatments available. These are antiviral treatments that are taken daily, once a day, and they tend to work really well, and people seem to have low side effects from taking the treatment from the majority of individuals that we've heard from on treatment.

20:41

So if you find out that you are not protected against hepatitis B, and you don't have hepatitis B, you can protect yourself from getting hepatitis B or having to worry about it in the future. There is a safe vaccine that's been around for over 30 years that can protect you against hepatitis B, and it can take 2 to 3 doses to three shots of this, to protect you for the rest of your life, which is really great news. You can ask your doctor or your pharmacy about getting the hepatitis B vaccine. There's also a new two dose vaccine, which is taken at 0 and 1 month, so you only have to go back twice or go twice to the, to the doctor or pharmacy to get vaccinated, which is really

great on the three dose vaccine has taken over six months, that's a little bit longer. Both are extremely effective and work really well, and protecting you from hepatitis B, and if you have any of those risk factors that we talked about earlier.

21:31

So if you're born from first or second generation from any of those countries where we showed high prevalence of greater than 2% in the general population, definitely get tested and ask your doctor about vaccination as well. Make sure that you have protection against hepatitis B so this is something that you don't have to worry about in the future.

21:52

So how can you help stop hepatitis B from spreading?

21:56

The, obviously we talked about how Hepatitis B is spread blood to blood contact. That can be spread sexually as well. It's important not to share tooth brushes, razors, nail clips, clippers, or other personal items.

22:08

These have risk of potential blood, so if your gums bleed, or if you make yourself while you're racing, And then you, when you're shaving, and you share that with another person, It can potentially, something can potentially spread to them if they make themselves, or if they have a cut somewhere on. So it's important to make sure that you avoid sharing these personal items. Cover your cuts until they're healed. So if somebody does have hepatitis B, it's me just making sure that that individual keeps winning cupboard. And if you have a blood, still cleaning, it up is really important. This can be done with a bleach solution.

22:44

And then practice safe sex, definitely use condoms, especially if you or your partner is infected with hepatitis B and also don't share or re-use needles or equipment, including cookers, fans and cotton. And this is mostly for people who have a history, or who are currently using drugs, making sure that those individuals are using clean drugs every time is really essential or clean needles, excuse me, and equipment for injecting.

23:09

So, what if I want to get tested? Where do I go? What do I do? You can ask your doctor to get tested for hepatitis B. Your primary care doctor should be able to provide a quick and easy test. Make sure you ask for the hepatitis B panel. You can go to a Federally Qualified Health Center. These locations will take you, regardless of your, your status, whether or not you're a documented or undocumented individual. You can also go to some community health screening events and I'll talk to you a little bit about what we're doing at Hep B United Philadelphia right now to address testing In the current pandemic and how we're trying to put forth a contactless testing initiative for all of you.

23:53

So if, you know, community members who are considered to be high risk, you can send them to us and we can work to get you or your family or friends or colleagues tested for hepatitis B. What about vaccination? What if I just need vaccination? If I know I don't have hepatitis B have been tested before? You can get vaccinated at your doctor's office. If you need help finding a doctor, you can use this link here at thehepb.org website. There's a provider directory that we have there. You can also go to your local pharmacy, and if you need help finding a local

pharmacy in the Philadelphia area, you can go to this link here, which provides a list of all of the pharmacies that carry the hepatitis B vaccine and stock. Definitely call them ahead of time, and make sure that they can give you a vaccine, and maybe schedule an appointment. Sometimes that helps, especially as pharmacies, are kind of being bombarded with a lot of stuff right now because of COVID.

24:43

So what are we doing right now? Because of the current pandemic, we're doing a contactless screening program. This program links individuals who are at risk directly to the labs, so it kind of cuts out the middleman. So, if you're interested, you can link to the QR code here, or fill out the Google Form that's linked there, as well. And what happens is, you will be contacted by one of the Hep B Foundation staff members. We will fill out, help you fill out a form, and confirm that you're interested in getting tested. We will then work with a third party company to get you linked to a local lab. So we'll use, either, a Quest or LabCorp that's closest to you. And then, we will provide incentives for just transportation.

25:33

And we will start up with your test results within a couple of weeks after we get them back and explain to you what your test results mean, and how to understand them. And then we'll talk about follow ups, and what might what might you need to do after getting tested, and what that test result means. And so, yeah, This is just a comprehensive plan that we're trying to work on, because we know right now, in, terms of coven, that testing and vaccination rates are really low in the city of Philadelphia. And so we're trying to provide services to communities that need it most during this really strange time. So I hope this might be something that you or your community might be interested in. Feel free to reach out if you are, and we can either help you understand, the program if you're a community organization. That might not be outside of Philadelphia, or we can work with you if you're in Philadelphia in the Philadelphia area on our working with us to promote it in your communities, as well.

26:29

If you have questions about hepatitis B, if you have other questions that I didn't cover now, feel free to reach out in the question box, as well, but you can also check out our website. We have a ton of information about hepatitis B, it pretty much covers everything. We also host a regular blog, which talks about hepatitis B and what to do if you're infected healthy liver tips that goes into detail about important things to note. Research updates, and that sort of thing. If you have questions about personal issues related to hepatitis B or questions about vaccination, for example. You can go to info@hepb.org, or you can call the consult phone line at (215) 489-4900.

27:11

The CDC also has really great resources through the Know Hepatitis B campaign, and that link is at the bottom of the page here. The link, the resources on the CDC page, and the Hep B Foundation page are in multiple languages, and you can access those for free and download factsheets if you're going out into the communities that need those types of resources.

27:31

And with that, I will turn it back over to Evangeline and we can take any sort of questions that you guys might have.

27:42

We will now begin the Q&A portion of the webinar, as I mentioned at the beginning of the call, will start by answering questions submitted to us via the chat box. If you'd like to submit a question now, is, do so using the questions field on your screen.

28:06

So, I see there's a question in the question box, and this question is: In terms of connecting a community member to a specific lab or to get tested, do you schedule the appointment on their behalf?

28:16

Yes, we work to schedule the appointment for them and make sure it fits their schedule and try to find a lab closest to their location. So, it doesn't have to require a lot of effort. We know that, like, get this type of program is going to be a bit challenging, because it's putting the ask on the individual. And they have to want to get tested, whereas, like before we were going out to do community based testing at different health fairs and churches and that sort of thing. So, it was kind of a little bit more casual. So, yes, so, we'll schedule that with them. But the individual does have to want to do it. So, you know, it will be taking their time to get tested.

28:56

Good question, though. Yeah. This is a new program that we're launching the, the contact list testing program, and we're just pilot testing it to see how it goes, because we know that it will be awhile before we can go out into the community and provide direct services like we had in the past.

29:20

Another helpful thing that I wanted to mention, as well, the CDC has recently released new resources that are really helpful for hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccination awareness. Those resources available, are available on their website. And we have been sending them out, and we can send them out after the webinar, as well for people if they're interested.

30:07

We just had a comment. Really great updates. Thanks very much.

30:11

Thank you for joining.

30:13

Oh.

30:20

Yeah.

30:26

All right.

30:28

Alright. Well, it looks like there are no other questions in the question box, and if you do have questions that you don't maybe don't feel comfortable asking here, you can always e-mail us at any of the e-mails that are listed on this slide. But yeah. Thanks so much of Evangeline!

30:46

Cool.

30:50

Um.

30:53

So, look out for a survey from the Hepatitis B Foundation as you exit the webinar. We will be sharing recording of today's webinar. Thank you all, again. Have a great day.

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