

Announcements

Hepatitis Awareness Month and National Hepatitis Testing Day — May 2013

In the United States, an estimated 3.5–5.3 million persons have chronic hepatitis B or chronic hepatitis C, and as many as three fourths of those with hepatitis C are unaware they are infected. To increase provider and public awareness of viral hepatitis and the need for testing, May has been designated Hepatitis Awareness Month, and May 19 is recognized as National Hepatitis Testing Day.

Testing of persons to assess current infection with hepatitis C virus, especially those born during 1945–1965 (i.e., “baby boomers”), who have a higher prevalence of chronic hepatitis C than other birth cohorts (1), is an important step in achieving the viral hepatitis prevention goals set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2). CDC also has published updated testing guidance for clinicians and laboratorians to ensure the identification of persons with current hepatitis C virus infection (3).

To promote viral hepatitis awareness beyond Hepatitis Awareness Month, CDC’s Division of Viral Hepatitis will partner with the National Hepatitis B United Coalition (Hep B United) to release a national, multilingual education campaign in June. This campaign will engage community partners to promote hepatitis B virus testing among Asian Americans and other populations experiencing health disparities related to hepatitis B.

References

1. CDC. Vital signs: evaluation of hepatitis C virus infection testing and reporting — eight U.S. sites, 2005–2011. *MMWR* 2013;62:357–61.
2. Department of Health and Human Services. Combating the silent epidemic of viral hepatitis: action plan for the prevention, care and treatment of viral hepatitis. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2011. Available at http://www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/hepatitis/actionplan_viralhepatitis2011.pdf.
3. CDC. Testing for HCV infection: an update of guidance for clinicians and laboratorians. *MMWR* 2013;62:362–5.

Click It or Ticket Campaign — May 20–June 2, 2013

In 2011, approximately 21,000 passenger vehicle occupants (excluding motorcyclists) died in motor vehicle crashes in the United States, representing 66% of all motor vehicle crash deaths (1). An additional 2.6 million occupants were treated for injuries in emergency departments (2). Although seat belt use in the United States reached 87% overall, millions of persons continue to travel unrestrained (3). Using a seat belt is one of the most effective means of preventing serious injury or death in the event of a crash. Seat belts saved an estimated 11,949 lives in 2011. If everyone had been buckled up, an estimated 3,400 additional lives could have been saved (4).

Click It or Ticket, a national campaign coordinated annually by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to increase the proper use of seat belts, will be conducted May 20–June 2, 2013. Law enforcement agencies across the nation will conduct intensive, high-visibility enforcement of seat belt laws during both daytime and nighttime hours. Nighttime enforcement of seat belt laws is encouraged because seat belt use is lower at night (1). Campaign activities in 2013 focus on the need for all adults and all children who have outgrown booster seats* to buckle up on every trip. Additional information about the 2013 Click It or Ticket campaign activities is available at <http://www.nhtsa.gov/PEAK>. Additional information on preventing motor-vehicle crash injuries is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety>.

*Guidelines for child passenger safety are available at http://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/child_passenger_safety/cps-factsheet.html.

References

1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. 2011 motor vehicle crashes: overview. Washington, DC: US Department of Transportation; 2012. Available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/811701.pdf>.
2. CDC. WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System). Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars>.
3. Shults RA, Beck LF. Self-reported seatbelt use, United States, 2002–2010: does prevalence vary by state and type of seatbelt law? *J Safety Res* 2012; 43:417–20.
4. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Lives saved in 2011 by restraint use and minimum-drinking-age laws. Washington, DC: US Department of Transportation; 2012. Available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/811702.pdf>.