

## May is National Hepatitis Awareness Month

### What is Hepatitis?

The word **hepatitis** means inflammation of the liver. Toxins, certain drugs/medications, some diseases, heavy alcohol use, and bacterial and viral infections can all cause hepatitis. **Viral hepatitis** refers to a group of viruses that harm the liver. Viral hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplants. Many people living with viral hepatitis do not know they are infected. The most common types of viral hepatitis are **Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.**



### **Inside this Health Bulletin:**

- Viral Hepatitis Awareness
- Asthma Triggers
- Springtime Safety
- Healthy Heart Tips



### Symptoms of Hepatitis

- Fever
- Tiredness
- Joint pain
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Gray-colored stool
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)

### How you can get Hepatitis A:

- Coming in direct contact with the stool (feces) of an infected person
- Putting anything in your mouth that was touched by an infected person who did not wash his or her hands after using the bathroom or changing a diaper
- Having sex with an infected person that involves oral-anal contact

### How you can get Hepatitis B and C:

- Coming in direct contact with the blood of an infected person
- Having unprotected sex with an infected partner
- Being born to an infected mother
- Sharing needles and equipment to inject drugs
- Having direct contact with open sores or used bandages of an infected person
- Accidental needle sticks
- Tattooing/piercing using unclean equipment
- Sharing personal items such as razors and toothbrushes with an infected person

### Vaccine Prevention and Treatment for Viral Hepatitis

	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Hepatitis C
<b>Vaccine?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Treatment?</b>	No specific treatment (illness usually resolves on its own)	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

**Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C infections can be chronic or even fatal if not treated. Talk with your doctor to see if you are at risk for hepatitis.**

### **Stay in Touch with the Health Bulletin**

You can find the Health Bulletin in many languages at [http://www.phila.gov/Health/units/ddc/Health\\_Bulletin/The\\_Health\\_Bulletin.html](http://www.phila.gov/Health/units/ddc/Health_Bulletin/The_Health_Bulletin.html).

Is there a health topic you would like to know more about? Please let us know. For more information about the Health Bulletin, contact Marialisa Ramirez at 215-685-6861 or [Healthbulletin@phila.gov](mailto:Healthbulletin@phila.gov).

## Asthma Triggers

**Asthma** is a disease that affects your lungs. It can cause wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and coughing. Asthma can be controlled by taking asthma medicine and avoiding **asthma triggers** (things that can cause an attack). You should prevent or remove the **asthma triggers** in your home that can make your asthma worse.

### Asthma Triggers

- Respiratory infections
- Secondhand smoke
- Outdoor air pollution
- Cockroach allergens
- Grasses and pollens
- Dust mites
- Pets
- Mold



***If you have asthma, remember to take your medicine exactly as your doctor tells you to do. Avoid asthma triggers that can cause an asthma attack. If you use an inhaler, always carry it with you. Using your inhaler more than you're told to by your doctor can make your asthma worse!***

## Springtime Fun and Safety

**Spring is a great time to exercise and let your children and pets play outside. Help your kids stay healthy and safe during these months.**

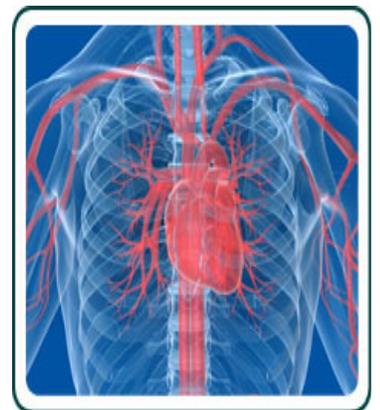
**Some good advice for adults and kids:**

- Always wear a helmet when you ride your bicycle to prevent head injury
- Do not play with dogs you do not know (they can bite!)
- Tell someone right away if you are bitten by a dog
- **CALL the Health Department at (215) 685-6748 if you or someone else has been bitten by a dog or other animal.** They can tell you what you should do.

## Healthy Heart Tips

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. People of all ages can suffer from heart disease. You can help prevent heart disease by making the following healthy choices:

- **Eat healthy.** Be sure to eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Being overweight can increase your risk of heart disease.
- **Exercise often.** Exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure.
- **Do not smoke.** Smoking greatly increases your risk for heart disease.
- **Limit your alcohol use.** Drinking too much alcohol causes high blood pressure.
- **Control your diabetes.** High blood sugar levels can increase your risk for heart disease.



**If you have a heart attack, you are more likely to survive if you know the signs and symptoms, call 9-1-1 right away, and get to a hospital quickly.**

**Symptoms of a heart attack include:**

- Pain in the jaw, neck or back
- Pain in the arms or shoulder
- Feeling weak, light-headed, or faint
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain