

July 11, 2018

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

Find the Missing Millions



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St. Lucie County, FL – The Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie is recognizing World Hepatitis Day with an event on Friday, July 27, 2018. We invite you to come out from 9:00 am to noon at our Fort Pierce location, 714 Avenue C; and then from 1:00 to 4:00 pm at our Port St. Lucie location, 5150 NW Milner Drive. The following tests will be offered at no charge: hepatitis, *HIV*, *STDs*. Free vaccines for *hepatitis A* and *B* will also be provided for those who are eligible. More information about viral hepatitis will be available along with giveaways for participants.

Find the Missing Millions is the 2018 World Hepatitis Day campaign theme. The campaign is a call to action for people around the world to join in the quest to find the “missing millions”, the 300 million around the world who are infected with viral hepatitis and do not know. Actions include raising awareness, testing for viral hepatitis, and connecting those who need medical care.

An estimated 2.7 to 3.9 million people in the United States are infected with chronic hepatitis C, in St. Lucie County, there has been a 5-year average of 384 newly identified cases of chronic hepatitis C, and 61 newly identified chronic hepatitis B cases. There are preventative vaccines for hepatitis A and B, and now there is treatment for hepatitis C.

“There is treatment and there is a cure for hepatitis C, we ask that you take the next step, it is important to get tested for hepatitis, especially if you have any risk factors,” said Clint Sperber, Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County. Take the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s Viral Hepatitis Risk Assessment - please go to: <https://www2a.cdc.gov/hepatitis/RiskAssessment/start.html>.

Viral hepatitis is caused by infection by one of five viruses - hepatitis A, B, C, D or E. All hepatitis viruses can cause inflammation of the liver, and chronic hepatitis B or C can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. Many of those who are chronically infected are unaware of their infection and appear healthy while liver damage could still be occurring (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).

Viral hepatitis is also a global threat. It accounts for 1.34 million deaths globally each year and causes two out of every three liver cancer deaths. Since 75% of people with hepatitis B or C do not feel symptoms, many people may go untested, undiagnosed, and without treatment. Of the estimated 325 million people in the world infected with hepatitis, up to 290 million are living with hepatitis B or C without being aware.

If you are unable to attend our free testing event for World Hepatitis Day on Friday, July 27, DOH-St. Lucie offers comprehensive testing at our Milner location. This blood draw test is for hepatitis B and C, syphilis, HIV and includes testing for gonorrhea and chlamydia. An appointment is not necessary; however, it is recommended. Please call 772-462-3800 for more information on getting tested.

About the Florida Department of Health

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