



## GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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[www.gtchd.org](http://www.gtchd.org)

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**For Immediate Release**  
**Friday, May 11, 2018**

### **The Grand Traverse County Health Department Observes Hepatitis Awareness Month**

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month and the Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) is encouraging community members to get tested, get vaccinated, and know their status. In addition, with the outbreak of hepatitis A still a concern in Michigan, GTCHD would like to remind individuals that we're offering a special walk-in hepatitis A vaccination clinic this **Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> from 10am-1pm** (please see additional information below).\*

While each of the hepatitis viruses A, B, and C can produce similar symptoms, each virus affects the liver differently. Each virus can also be spread in different ways and has different populations that are commonly at risk.

#### **Hepatitis A**

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection that can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months. The hepatitis A virus is usually spread when a person ingests the virus from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by an infected person. Hepatitis A can be easily prevented with a safe and effective vaccine, which is recommended for all children at one year of age and for adults who may be at risk.

\*Michigan is still experiencing a statewide hepatitis A outbreak, with 828 cases to date. In attempts to prevent further spread of hepatitis A in Northern Michigan, walk-in hepatitis A vaccinations are available at the Grand Traverse County Health Department during our regular hours of operation, M-F 8:00am-4:30pm, and we are also offering a special walk-in clinic this **Saturday, May 12th from 10am-1pm** at 2600 LaFranier Rd. More information can be found about the outbreak at <https://michigan.gov/hepatitisaoutbreak> or at <http://www.gtchd.org/2022/Hepatitis-A>.\*

#### **Hepatitis B**

The hepatitis B virus is spread primarily when blood, or certain other body fluids, from a person infected enters the body of someone who is not infected. The virus can be spread through sexual transmission and through contact with blood, such as sharing injection drug equipment. Because the hepatitis B virus can also be passed from an infected woman to her baby at birth, the hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for all infants.

## **Hepatitis C**

The hepatitis C virus is usually spread when blood from a person infected enters the body of someone who is not infected. Today, most people become infected with hepatitis C by sharing needles, syringes, or any other equipment to inject drugs. While rare, hepatitis C can be transmitted sexually, as well as from an infected woman to her baby. People born from 1945-1965, or baby boomers, are five times more likely to have hepatitis C. There is currently no vaccination available for hepatitis C, but effective treatments are available.

May 19<sup>th</sup> is also National Hepatitis Testing Day and the GTCHD recommends that individuals use this as a reminder to make an appointment with their primary care provider to get tested and learn their status. It is also a good reminder to get vaccinated. Hepatitis A and B vaccinations are both available at the Grand Traverse County Health Department. Please call for more information 231-995-6131.

For general information about viral hepatitis, please visit:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hepawarenessabcs.htm>

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