



Your Liver. Your Life.

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National HelpLine 800-GO-LIVER (800-465-4837)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**May Is Hepatitis Awareness Month -- Take a Simple Test to
Assess Your Risk for Hepatitis**

(New York, NY) Hepatitis is considered one of the most looming public health threats in the United States and yet most people who have the disease are unaware they are at risk. In a landmark study conducted by the Institute of Medicine and released in January, it is projected up to 5.3 million people—2 percent of the U.S. populations—are living with chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C. These diseases are more common than HIV/AIDS in the U.S. Yet, because hepatitis B and hepatitis C often present no symptoms, most people who have them are unaware until they develop liver cancer or liver disease many years later.

Chronic hepatitis B and C cause thousands of cases of liver cancer, liver disease, and death each year the U.S. and these infections account for nearly half of the liver transplantations that must be performed annually. "Although hepatitis B and C are preventable, the rates of infection have not declined over the past several years, underscoring the conclusion that we have allowed gaps in screening, prevention, and treatment to go unchecked," said committee chair R. Palmer Beasley, professor of epidemiology and disease control, University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston.

A quick, simple risk analysis can be found on the American Liver Foundation's web site (www.liverfoundation.org/HAM). If anyone finds they are at risk they should see their health care provider. And for more information about hepatitis and all liver disease, please visit the American Liver Foundation website at www.liverfoundation.org or call the toll free help line at 1-800-GO-LIVER (1800-465-4837).

In an effort to raise public awareness of the need to take care of your liver, the American Liver Foundation offers several education programs. *Love Your Liver* is directed to elementary, middle and high school students to help teach healthy habits for diet and lifestyle. *Treatment Choice Initiatives* is directed at those already infected with hepatitis or those at high risk to provide information on testing and treatment course. During May, Hepatitis Awareness Month, ALF urges American to learn what



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can be done to prevent the spread of hepatitis and what to do if they already have the disease. Early detection of hepatitis highly increases the probability of effective treatment.

The American Liver Foundation is devoted to liver health and disease prevention. Through its research, education and advocacy programs, the Foundation and its nationwide network of divisions, has led the fight against liver disease since 1976.