



San Francisco Hep B Free

First city in the U.S. to test and vaccinate all Asian and Pacific Islanders for hepatitis B

HBV and Liver Cancer in API Americans

Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection in the world

- Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is a serious infection of the liver, and can lead to premature death from liver cancer or liver failure.
- HBV can be transmitted from an infected mother to her child at birth, through unprotected sex or through contaminated blood (sharing toothbrushes, razors, needles for tattoos/piercings)
- 60-80% of all primary liver cancer worldwide is caused by hepatitis B.
- HBV is second only to smoking tobacco in causing the most cancer deaths in the world.

HBV is more common and 50-100 times more infectious than HIV

- Worldwide: 370-400 million people (1 in 20) in the world have chronic HBV infection vs. 40 million living with HIV/AIDS.
- About 2/3 of those with chronic HBV infection in the world live in Asia.
- In the U.S., an estimated 1.2 million people are living with chronic HBV infection (compared with an estimated 900,000 living with HIV/AIDS) and over 60% are Asian or Pacific Islander Americans .

Greatest health disparity between Asians and Caucasians: HBV and Liver Cancer

- In the U.S., about 1 in 10 foreign-born Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Americans has chronic HBV infection compared with 1 in 1000 Caucasian Americans.
- Liver cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in API men living in the U.S.
- API men are 4 times more likely to die from liver cancer than Caucasian Americans.
- San Francisco has the highest liver cancer rate among all counties in the nation.

HBV is a silent killer in the API community

- Many Asians are infected at birth or during early childhood and are unaware of their infection because they show no symptoms and may have normal blood tests for liver function.
- Diagnosis of chronic hepatitis B can be made only with a specific blood test for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg).
- Without appropriate monitoring or treatment, 1 in 4 of those with chronic HBV infection will die of liver cancer or liver failure.
- In the U.S., approximately 10-15 people die every day as a result of HBV infection

Hepatitis B vaccine is the “first anti-cancer vaccine”

- Hepatitis B is preventable with a vaccine that has been available for over 20 years.
- The 3-shot hepatitis B vaccine can potentially provide lifelong protection from HBV infection
- The hepatitis B vaccine is so effective in preventing HBV and liver cancer that the World Health Organization referred to it as the “first anti-cancer vaccine.”

Why is it important to promote HBV awareness and testing?

- To identify the 1 in 10 API Americans who don't know they are infected..
- To identify those who are unprotected, so they can get vaccinated against HBV.
- To inform those who are chronically infected so that they receive appropriate medical management and regular screening for liver cancer which can lead to early detection and successful treatment.

References

Asian Liver Center at Stanford University
World Health Organization
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Cancer Institute SEER Program

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