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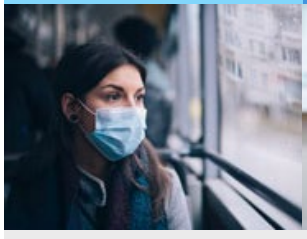
Newsletter Volume 154 - July 2021

28 July, World Hepatitis Day



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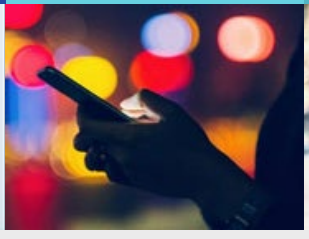

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28 July, World Hepatitis Day

World Hepatitis Day is commemorated each year on 28 July to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes a range of health problems, including liver cancer. The date of 28 July was chosen because it is the birthday of Nobel-prize winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and as well as vaccine for the virus.

Hepatitis: An inflammatory condition of the liver, most common causative factor being virus. Hepatitis can also occur due to medications, drugs, toxins and alcohol also. Viral infections of liver that are classified as Hepatitis include Hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E. Respective virus is responsible for each type of virally transmitted hepatitis. Together, Hepatitis B and C are the most common cause of deaths, with 1.3 million lives lost each year. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, viral hepatitis continues to claim thousands of lives every day.

Hepatitis A: Occurs due to Hepatitis A virus (HAV). Source of infection is food and water contaminated with human faces, sexual contact and physical close contact with Hepatitis A infected person.

Hepatitis B: Transmitted through contact with infectious body fluids, such as blood, vaginal secretions, or semen, containing the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). Injection drug use, unprotected sex with an infected partner, or sharing razors with an infected person increases the risk of getting Hepatitis B.

Hepatitis C: Hepatitis C virus (HCV) causes Hepatitis C infection. It spreads through direct contact with infected body fluids, typically through injection drug use and unprotected sexual contact.

Hepatitis D: Also called as Delta Hepatitis. It is caused by Hepatitis D virus (HDV), this virus cannot multiply without the presence of Hepatitis B. It passes on through direct contact with infected blood.

Hepatitis E: Caused by Hepatitis E virus (HEV); it's a waterborne disease and mostly found in poor sanitation areas.

Complications: Chronic Hepatitis B or C can often lead to more serious health problems. Because the virus affects the liver, people with chronic hepatitis B or C are at risk for:

- Chronic liver disease
- Cirrhosis
- Liver cancer

Treatment: Treatment options are determined basis the type of Hepatitis and whether the infection is acute or chronic.

Prevention:
Hygiene: Practicing good hygiene is one key way to avoid contracting Hepatitis A and E. Avoid:

- Water and ice from local streets/unhygienic areas
- Raw or undercooked shellfish and oysters
- Raw fruit and vegetables

Hepatitis B, C, and D contracted through contaminated blood can be prevented by:

- Not sharing drug needles
- Not sharing razors
- Not using someone else's toothbrush
- Not touching spilled blood

Since Hepatitis B and C can also be contracted through unprotected sexual contact with infected persons, practicing safe sex by using condoms and dental dams can help decrease the risk of infection.

Vaccines: Use of vaccine is an important key to preventing hepatitis. As of now, Hepatitis A and B only can be prevented through vaccination.

Source:
Healthline

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COVID-19 Vaccine Myths vs. Fact

Myth: Receiving an mRNA vaccine will alter your DNA.
Fact: mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid and can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA does not have the ability to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup or DNA. The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defences to safely develop protection or immunity to disease.

Myth: You should not get vaccinated if you want to have a baby.
Fact: If you are trying to become pregnant now or want to get pregnant in the future, you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine. There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems or problems in getting pregnant. A routine pregnancy testing is not required before COVID-19 vaccination. If you are trying to become pregnant, you do not need to avoid pregnancy after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Like with all vaccines, scientists are studying COVID-19 vaccines carefully for side effects now and will report findings as they become available.

Myth: Vaccines contain toxic ingredients.
Fact: Todays vaccines use only the ingredients they need to be as safe and effective as possible. The gelatin and egg proteins in some flu vaccines can cause allergic reactions in very rare cases. Those affected typically have a history of severe allergies to gelatin or eggs. If you have severe allergies to ingredients in vaccines or other injectable medications, tell the nurse before your COVID-19 vaccine or talk to your doctor.

Myth: Natural immunity is healthier and more effective than vaccine immunity.
Fact: Vaccines allow you to build immunity without the damaging effects that vaccine-preventable diseases can have. These diseases can cause serious health problems and even be life-threatening. Even with the advances in health care, the diseases vaccines prevent can still be very serious. Vaccination is the best way to prevent them.

Myth: The side effects of the vaccine are really bad.
Fact: The most common side effects from this vaccine have included fatigue, muscle pains, joint pains, headaches, pain and redness at the injection site. With the mRNA vaccines, these symptoms were more common after the second dose of the vaccine and the majority of side effects were mild.

Myth: The person who receives the COVID-19 vaccine must quarantine for 2-14 days because he can transmit infection.
Fact: None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain live COVID-19 virus. They do not lead to any infection even if they result in short- lasting side effect such as fever or fatigue. Isolation or quarantine is therefore not required.

Myth: Period between the two doses of COVID-19 vaccine should be three months, not one month.
Fact: The interval period between vaccine doses depends on the type of vaccine. Government of India will advise on timing of the second dose when you receive your first dose.

Myth: I can take the COVID-19 vaccine if I have just received a vaccine for another disease.
Fact: There should be a minimum interval of 14 days between the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine and any other vaccine against other disease.

Myth: If you already had COVID-19, you do not need the vaccine.
Fact: Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people are advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person.

Source:
WHO
The GW Medical Faculty Associates

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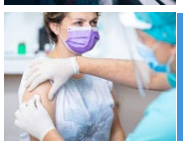

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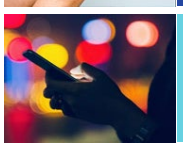

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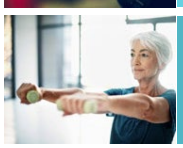

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Difference between gout and Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)

Background: Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and gout are both categories of arthritis, but the causes, symptoms and long-term effects are different. A person with RA may have a higher risk of developing gout than a person without it, possibly because they share some risk factors. RA is an autoimmune condition and body's immune system mistakenly attacks the healthy cells in the lining of the joints, which causes pain, inflammation and swelling. Gout is also an inflammatory disorder, but it is not an autoimmune condition. Instead, a person develops gout because of high levels of uric acid in the blood. Uric acid crystals can deposit in the synovial tissues, especially in the hands, feet and elbows.

Symptoms: Below are some symptoms to differentiate both the conditions:

Rheumatoid arthritis	Gout
Pain can be mild, moderate or severe	Redness, swelling and intense pain
Pain associated with stiffness	No stiffness present
It can affect any joint at a time	It can affect single joint at a time
It involves both larger and smaller joints	It involves only small joint- like big toe
Pain episode is increasing, if left untreated	Pain occurs in intermittent episode

Causes and risk factors: RA results from a problem with the immune system, though researches have not been able to comment on why this occurs in some people and not others. Individuals with the following risk factors are more likely to experience RA:

- **Age:** RA usually appears when a person is in their 60s, though it can happen at any age.
- **Gender:** It is two to three times more common in females than males.
- **Genetics**: Having specific genetic features can make it more likely to develop.
- **Body mass:** People with obesity are more likely to have RA.
- **Smoking:** Smoking or exposure to cigarette smoke or nicotine-containing products before birth can increase risk
- **History of giving birth:** Those who have never given birth may have a higher risk.

Gout occurs when a person's body builds up excess amounts of uric acid. Some people naturally produce excess uric acid, which can make gout more likely. People with the following risk factors are more likely to experience uric acid build-up and gout:

- **Gender:** It is more common in males.
- **Health conditions:** A history of high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, kidney problems, and other aspects of metabolic syndrome make gout more likely.
- **Medications:** Taking medications such as diuretics or "water pills" can increase the risk.
- **Drinks:** A high consumption of alcohol and drinks high in fructose, a type of sugar, can increase the risk.
- **Food:** Foods containing purines can raise uric acid levels; eg. red meat and some seafood.
- **Body mass:** Having obesity is a risk factor.

Diagnosis: To diagnose RA or gout, a doctor will carry out a physical examination and ask for:

- Medical history, including family history and any other chronic conditions
- Symptoms and where they are in the body
- Dietary habits

A doctor will also order blood testing. A uric acid test can help identify gout. Other biomarkers may help indicate if a person has RA. They include:

- Anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide (Anti CCP)
- C-reactive protein and ESR (erythrocyte sedimentation rate)
- Rheumatoid factor

Imaging tests, such as X-ray and MRI scans, can detect:

- Damage to soft tissue or bone
- A build-up of uric acid crystals around the joints
- Signs of inflammation around the join

Your treating doctor may use a needle to remove fluid from a swollen joint to test for the presence of uric acid crystals that may indicate gout.

Source:
Medical News Today

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Smart phone addiction, is it true?

Background: Cell phones have become such powerful and versatile tools that, for many people, they feel literally indispensable. While a smartphone, tablet, or computer can be a hugely productive tool, compulsive use of these devices can interfere with work, school, and relationships. When you spend more time on social media or playing games than you do interacting with real people, or you can't stop yourself from repeatedly checking texts, emails, or app, even when it has negative consequences in your life, it may be time to reassess your technology use. And, over the past 5 years, Google Trends indicates that searches for "cell phone addiction" have likewise been rising. Pathological phone use has given rise to a raft of new terminology, such as:

- **Nomophobia:** Fear of going without your phone
- **Textaphrenia:** Fear that you can't send or receive texts
- **Phantom vibration:** Feeling that your phone is alerting you when it really isn't

How dopamine is connected with usages of smartphone?

Dopamine is a happy hormone, it is secreted when you are in rewarding situation. Some people feel good in social virtual environment. When they use certain social platform frequently, they feel good because of dopamine secretion. Some apps are designed in a way that force us to keep checking them and leading to an addiction behaviour.

How smartphone can have a negative impact in your life?

- **Increasing loneliness and depression:** Excessive use of smartphone and less involvement in real environment, comparing your life with peers on social media platform can lead to loneliness, depression, anxiety, etc.
- **Diminishing your ability to concentrate and think deeply or creatively:** Persistent and frequent usages can distract you from important work. Always being online can interrupt your creativity level, because your thoughts will not get time for any analytical thinking.
- **Disturbing your sleep:** Excessive smartphone use can disturb your sleep, which can have a serious impact on your overall mental health. It can impact your memory, affect your ability to think clearly and reduce your cognitive and learning skills.

Symptoms: There is no specific amount of time spent on your phone, or the frequency you check for updates, or the number of messages you send or receive that indicates an addiction or overuse problem. Some warning are mention below,

- Trouble completing tasks at work or home
- Isolation from family and friends
- Having a "fear of missing out"
- Feeling of dread, anxiety, or panic if you leave your smartphone at home

Withdrawal symptoms: Some people feel withdrawal symptoms mention below:

- Restlessness
- Anger or irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sleep problems
- Craving access to your smartphone or other device

Self-help tips for smartphone addiction:

- Recognize the triggers that make you reach for your phone
- Understand the difference between interacting in-person and online
- Build your coping skills
- Recognize any underlying problems that may support your compulsive behaviour
- Strengthen your support network

Source:
Healthline
HelpGuide

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Lifestyle changes after heart attack

Background: The main function of the heart is to supply oxygen rich blood to all the parts of the body. Heart Attack (also called Myocardial Infarction (MI) in medical parlance) occurs when the blood flow reduces or stops reaching a part of the heart thereby leading to partial or complete damage of the heart muscles. Fat deposit around the heart artery leads to narrowing of the artery and causes stoppage or reduced blood flow to the artery. After heart attack, the person is required to maintain the healthy life style to reduce the further complication in the body. Below are some of the lifestyle changes that are recommended to be adapted for Heart Attack survivors.

Be More Active: The American Heart Association recommends at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise, at least 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise, or a combination of both. Make sure you start with warm up and increase the physical activity slowly in your daily routine to avoid the load on heart. Regular physical exercise will strengths the heart and improve the overall health condition.

Cessation of unhealthy habits: Unhealthy habits like smoking and consumption of alcohol increases the risk for heart attack. Smoking can damage your heart function and prevent oxygen-rich blood from getting to your organs and other body parts. Nicotine and alcohol are associated risk factor of heart attack, elimination of these addictions/habits life reduces the risk of another episode of heart attack.

Mindful eating: Food that you eat and the amount of food can affect other risk factors such as cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. Try to avoid or limit foods that have very few nutrients and a lot of calories. Limit saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, red meat, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages. Include more nutrient rich food in your diet like leafy, green veggies, whole grains, such as whole wheat, brown rice, oats, rye and quinoa, berries nuts and seeds, such as almonds, walnuts, flaxseeds, and chia seeds.

Keep an eye on underlying diseases: Diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol level are major contributing factors for heart attack. If there is presence of any of these underlying disease; it should be monitored, regular check-ups along with appropriate treatment and compliance to medication is highly recommended.

Maintain a good mental health: After a heart attack, one is likely to experience emotions such as, anxiety, depression, fear, denial etc. These emotions can last anywhere from 2 to 6 months and can affect day to day life. Some studies, suggest that heart attacks and emotions are interlinked. Include mediation, yoga in your day to day life. In case of excess emotional disturbance, seek a medical help.

Takeaway:
There's no time like now to get started on your heart-health journey. Have a conversation with your doctor, who can help you with:

- Making good food choices
- Finding activities you enjoy that will keep you moving
- Understanding how small changes can make big improvements

Source:
Healthline
WebMD

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