# 1 in 2 people with Hepatitis C in the UK unaware they have it

**Tuesday 30 July, 2019**

On 28th July 2019, World Hepatitis Day, the British Liver Trust united with organisations, health professionals and supporters across the world to push for urgent action to find the millions of people globally who are unaware that they have the life-threatening Hepatitis C virus (HCV).

Worldwide, 325 million people are living with viral hepatitis and approximately 210,000 people across the whole of the UK are living with chronic hepatitis C,[1] with around 50% remaining undiagnosed.[2]

World Hepatitis Day called for countries across the world to eliminate the virus, which is a liver infection that spreads through blood-to-blood contact.

NHS England aims to eliminate hepatitis C by 2025, five years ahead of the World Health Organization's target of elimination by 2030.

Pamela Healy, Chief Executive of the British Liver Trust, said: "A key challenge in eliminating the virus is the fact that HCV often has no symptoms in the early stages. It is therefore vital that both the public and primary care professionals are aware of the risk factors

"Many people who have the virus are undiagnosed. There are now very effective treatments that provide a cure. If you have ever dabbled in drugs (even if it was many years ago); had unprotected sex with someone who may have been infected; had a tattoo or received healthcare abroad please go and get tested to be sure. I would also urge everyone to go to our website and do our online quiz to see if they are at risk – visit www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/s..."

Hepatitis C affects people very differently – many people with it may have no symptoms at all and may never know they have the virus. About one in five people infected with hepatitis C will clear the virus, in its acute form, within two to six months. About 80% of people who are infected with hepatitis C will develop a chronic infection.

Hepatitis refers to an inflammatory condition of the liver. It's commonly caused by a viral infection, but there are other possible causes of hepatitis. These include autoimmune hepatitis and hepatitis that occurs as a secondary result of medications, drugs, toxins, and alcohol.

The British Liver Trust raises awareness of viral hepatitis year round via their Love Your Liver campaign. Liver disease is largely preventable. More than 90% is due to three main risk factors: viral hepatitis, obesity and alcohol. The British Liver Trust's Love Your Liver campaign focuses on three simple steps to Love Your Liver back to health:

Drink within recommended limits and have three consecutive days off alcohol every week

- Cut down on sugar, carbohydrates and fat and take more exercise
- Know the risk factors for viral hepatitis and get tested or vaccinated if at risk
- British Liver Trust's at-risk screener is available to assess your risk of liver disease:

www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/s...

[1] https://assets.publishing.serv...

[2] https://www.britishlivertrust....

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