World Hepatitis Day 2026

This year’s theme, “Hepatitis: Let’s Break It Down,” calls for the removal of barriers that stand between people and the services that can save their lives.

July 27, 2026 By Eva Lorenz

Tuesday, July 28, marks World Hepatitis Day 2026, a day organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes severe liver disease and liver cancer.

This year’s theme, “Hepatitis: Let’s Break It Down,” calls for turning science into action with five key messages:

- Leverage existing science and policies;
- Put people and communities at the center of hepatitis elimination;
- Ensure equitable access to hepatitis services for all;
- Integrate hepatitis services into universal health coverage;
- Accelerate research and innovation.

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The second-largest organ in the human body after the skin, the liver plays an essential role in the body's filtration system, removing toxins and waste products from the bloodstream and storing important nutrients, like vitamins and minerals.

Viral hepatitis attacks the liver; when left untreated, it can lead to scarring of the liver (cirrhosis), liver cancer, the need for a liver transplant and death.

Hepatitis can be caused by several factors, including toxins, excess alcohol use, autoimmune diseases, fat in the liver and viruses, including the three most common ones: hepatitis A, B and C. (The other two main strains are D and E.)

The WHO estimates that 1.34 million people worldwide died of chronic viral hepatitis B (HBV) and C (HCV) in 2024. That same year, approximately 1.8 million new infections (over 4,900 daily) were diagnosed.

Effective vaccines are available for hep A and B. HCV is curable in most cases; however, HBV is not.

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The global awareness day is observed on July 28 in honor of Nobel Prize–winning scientist and global health advocate Baruch S. Blumberg, MD, PhD, who in 1967 discovered the HBV and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for the virus.

“We’re extremely proud that the Hepatitis B Foundation has been able to grow our hepatitis delta and liver cancer programs and expand our global reach in recent years, and our new mission statement reflects that progress,” said Hepatitis B Foundation president Chari A. Cohen, DrPH, MPH, in a press release.

For World Hepatitis Day, the Hepatitis B foundation is introducing 22 new stories in its Just B storytelling program to highlight the humans behind hepatitis B and liver cancer as well as a new set of videos about the role of the hepatitis B vaccine in protecting babies from infection. The Hepatitis B Foundation also launched a new mission statement, logo and tagline to better reflect the organization’s work in liver disease broadly: “A World Free of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis D and Liver Cancer.”

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To get involved, visit the World Hepatitis Day website.

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