

The Facts About Hepatitis C “The Silent Epidemic”

Most people are familiar with Hepatitis A and B, but many know very little about Hepatitis C. The Hepatitis C (HCV) virus was identified in 1989. Unlike the other types of viral hepatitis, Hepatitis C is very difficult for the immune system to overcome. As a result, most Hepatitis C infections (75-85%) become chronic and lead to liver disease, including cirrhosis (scarring of the liver tissues) and liver failure. Hepatitis C infection is typically mild in its early stages, and it is rarely recognized until it has caused significant damage to the liver. The cycle of disease from infection to significant liver damage can take 20 years or more. Unlike Hepatitis A and B, there is no vaccine to protect against Hepatitis C.

Most people with Acute Hepatitis C have no symptoms. Symptoms of Hepatitis C are weakness, fever, nausea, and possible jaundice. They often do not appear until many years after infection, when the liver can no longer compensate for the damage that has accumulated. However, an infected person can spread the infection to others well before symptoms appear.

Hepatitis C can be prevented from spreading. The most efficient method of transmitting Hepatitis C is through injection of contaminated blood, as might happen during IV drug use. Needle and syringe exchange programs that emphasize use of clean, sterile needles are likely to stop the spread of Hepatitis C among IV drug users.

Never share objects such as needles, razors, toothbrushes, nail files and clippers, which can be a potential source of Hepatitis C transmission. When getting a manicure, tattoo, or body piercing, make sure sterile instruments are used and that the institution is licensed.

Although the risk of sexual transmission of Hepatitis C is small, you should always practice safe sex. People with Hepatitis C infection who have multiple partners or are in short-term relationships should use condoms to prevent the spread of the virus.

People who are exposed to blood in their work, such as health care workers, laboratory technicians, dentists, surgeons, nurses, emergency service workers, police officers, firefighters, paramedics, military personnel, or those who live with an infected individual, should take adequate precautions to prevent exposure to contaminated blood. This includes proper disposal of sharps and needles, regular hand washing, and use of gloves during invasive procedures. If you have a needle stick injury at your workplace, you should be tested right after the exposure and 4 to 6 months after the injury to make sure that you have not contracted Hepatitis C.

At this time there is no cure for Hepatitis C. A diagnosis of Hepatitis C infection does not mean you need treatment. If you have only slight liver abnormalities you may not need treatment. Your doctor may recommend follow up blood tests to monitor for liver problems.

Hepatitis C infection is treated with antiviral medications intended to clear the virus from your body. You doctor may recommend a combination of medications taken over several weeks. This treatment is effective for some patients. If your liver is severely damaged, a liver transplant may be an option. For people with Hepatitis C infection, a liver transplant is not a cure. Treatment with antiviral medications usually continue after a transplant, since Hepatitis C infection is likely to recur.

(Source: www.epidemic.org –www.webmd.com)

Benefits of Worksite Wellness Programs

Worksite wellness programs undoubtedly benefit both the corporations and staff members. Numerous studies have found a direct link, showing that healthful staff members make happy staff members, hence increasing productivity in the workplace.

Not only are staff members who exercise more apt to be productive, but they are more likely to stay with their corporation long term. This saves companies a great deal of money in applications and turnover costs.

Healthcare cost in the United States doubled between 1990 and 2001. They are expected to double again by 2012. During this time, studies have shown that adult obesity has risen as high as 80 percent in some states. This is a startling statistic. For every one percent of body mass indicator (BMI), a person's healthcare costs increase by \$120.

Not only is this costly for business but it can also be deadly, greatly raising one's chances of heart attack or stroke. Employees at risk for these two medical conditions cost businesses thousands of dollars more yearly than their healthful peers.

That is why Worksite Wellness programs are so essential. Having access to a workout facility and other healthful lifestyle choices should be implemented in every company. There really is no reason not to.

One study showed that implementing a Worksite Wellness program in the workplace, lowered sick leave by 28%, lowered the use of healthcare benefits by 26%, and lowered employee's compensation claims by 30%.

A Worksite Wellness Program indicates to employees that the company cares about their well being. If your company is interested in starting a Wellness Program, contact the HealthFirst Medical Marketing Department at 562-926-3440. We can offer resources that can help you get started with your program.

(Source: www.worksitewellness.com)

In House Modified Duty Works

HealthFirst Medical's "In House Modified Duty Program" continues to provide a very beneficial service for many companies. The program gives companies an alternative solution for injured employees who are on modified work restrictions. Many companies cannot accommodate the employee's restrictions and would have to send them home, which would create a lost time injury. Lost time injuries are very costly for employers and cause increases in their workers' comp premiums.

The perfect solution is to send the injured worker to HealthFirst's program. The employee spends his eight hour shift in our classroom learning important information regarding safety in the workplace, injury prevention, health and fitness. The employees take a walk each day and do stretching exercises. As soon as the patient is able to be returned to full duty they are released from the program.

Tony Nahale of the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District had this to say about the program. "The HealthFirst Modified Duty Program is a very beneficial option for the school district. The Wellness Coordinator deserves credit for running a solid operation." For more information on the program contact your marketing representative at 562-926-3440.

Best Exercise to Lose Weight

If someone told you right now what the absolute best exercise to lose weight was, would you do it? Well here it is. The best exercise to lose weight is: "the one you'll do." The two things that stop people from losing weight with exercise are either boredom or injury. The truth is that weight loss is about creating a calorie deficit, in other words, burning more calories than you take in. So start with something you can do, like walking or working out on an elliptical machine or an exercise bike. Cardio exercise creates greater weight loss than weight training. Commit to at least 30 minutes per day of cardio and you will lose weight and improve your health.