
Hepatitis Awareness Week: "It's Time for Action!"

Half-a-million Australians are living with chronic hepatitis B or C. Hepatitis B and C can cause serious liver disease and, if left untreated, can cause liver cancer, liver cirrhosis and liver failure.

This National Hepatitis Awareness Week, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) is joining forces with Hepatitis NSW and other community organisations to raise awareness of hepatitis and encourage the community to get tested for hepatitis B or C, have their livers checked and ask about treatment.

Associate Professor Amany Zekry, Director of St George Hospital's Liver Clinic, said there is an urgent need to ensure that appropriate education, information and support is reaching those at risk.

"In recent years there has been 300-400 cases of both hepatitis B and C recorded in South Eastern Sydney annually. Kogarah, Rockdale & Hurstville local government areas have the highest percentage prevalence of hepatitis B in South Eastern Sydney," Associate Professor Amany Zekry said.

"It's time for action on hepatitis B and C. We need to work together with GPs and our local communities to prevent, test, check and treat hepatitis in order to stop the more than 1,000 Australian lives lost each year to serious liver disease."

"More than 225,000 Australians are living with hepatitis B, but less than five per cent are receiving treatment. There is no such thing as being a healthy carrier of hepatitis B – it is vital to have your liver checked regularly which will help determine the best time to start treatment.

"There are also more than 230,000 Australians are with hepatitis C but less than two per cent currently receives treatment. New hepatitis C treatments are expected to be available the end of 2015. The new treatments have much fewer side effects and are much more effective at curing people of hepatitis C."

Associate Professor Zekry said it is important those who may be at risk of hepatitis B and C take action and get tested.

"If the tests show that they have hepatitis B or C, they should speak to their doctor about regular liver check-ups and treatment options," she said.

"These simple actions can save lives."

People affected by hepatitis are urged to talk to their GP or call the hepatitis Infoline on 1800 803 990. For more information on hepatitis, visit www.hep.org.au

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
Media contact: Elizabeth Grant 02 9382 8226 or 0428 628 722

SESLHD Hepatitis Awareness Week 2015 Events

Date	Event name	Description	Location
Monday 27 th July	Hepatitis Awareness Week Health Promotion Stall	Hepatitis Awareness Week promotion display (banner) Hepatitis resources available and merchandise.	Atrium, The Sutherland Hospital 430 Kingsway, Caringbah
Monday 27 th July	In service 'Reactivation of Hepatitis B with Immunosuppression'	In service to oncology staff at St George Hospital - Reactivation of Hepatitis B with Immunosuppression.	St George Hospital
Tuesday 28 th July 8.30am – 12pm	Scone & Scan	Hepatitis Awareness Week promotion – Morning tea provided. Education regarding viral hepatitis and need for screening. Fibroscan liver assessment available for registered clients of the St George Drug & Alcohol Service.	St George Drug & Alcohol Service 2 South Street Kogarah