

25 July 2014

LOVE YOU LIVER - RAISING AWARENESS FOR HEPATITIS AWARENESS WEEK (28 July - 3 August)

Figures show that one in 12 people worldwide are currently living with hepatitis B or C – a virus causing inflammation or swelling of the liver that lives in the blood.

Nationally, hepatitis C affects more than a quarter of a million people, yet despite the high prevalence of hepatitis B and C in the community, awareness of hepatitis remains relatively low, with only around 2,000 people currently undertaking treatment.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD), together with Hepatitis NSW and community organisations, is raising awareness of hepatitis as part of national Hepatitis Awareness Week, to inform the public about hepatitis and encourage those living with hepatitis to seek treatment.

As part of World Hepatitis Day, on 28 July, SESLHD will host the launch of Hepatitis Awareness Week with the 'Love Your Liver' event in Hurstville, targeting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities within the St George and South Eastern Sydney region.

Speaking at the launch of Hepatitis Awareness Week, Director of St George Hospital's Liver Clinic, Associate Professor Amany Zekry, said there is a continued need to reduce new infections and ensure that appropriate education, information and support is reaching those at risk.

"Hepatitis Awareness Week provides an opportunity for the community to become better informed about the virus, encourage people to be tested and seek treatment and consider ways they can be more aware of the needs of those living with hepatitis B and C," Associate Professor Zekry said.

Whilst hepatitis C can be cured in majority of cases, there is no vaccine for it. There is now an effective and safe vaccine for hepatitis B and treatment to make the virus inactive.

"People living with hepatitis should make lifestyle choices to improve their quality of life and be supported in adopting healthy ways of living. These can include eating a balanced diet, reducing alcohol consumption, smoking less and reducing stress," she said.

"South Eastern Sydney Local Health District has some of the best hepatitis prevention, treatment and care services in NSW. We also work closely with our colleagues in general practice and in the community sector to provide high quality health care to those who need it."

People affected by hepatitis are urged to talk to their GP or contact Hepatitis NSW on 9332 1599. For more information on hepatitis, visit www.hep.org.au

'Love Your Liver' and Hepatitis Awareness Week launch:

Date and time: Monday 28 July, 10.00am – 12.00pm

Venue: Hurstville Entertainment Centre, 16 MacMahon Street, Hurstville.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
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