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Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, most commonly caused by a viral infection. There are five main hepatitis viruses, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E. These five types are of greatest concern because of the burden of illness and death they cause and the potential for outbreaks and epidemic spread. In particular, types B and C lead to chronic disease in hundreds of millions of people and, together, are the most common cause of liver cirrhosis and cancer. Hepatitis A and E are typically caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water. Hepatitis B, C and D usually occur as a result of parenteral contact with infected body fluids. Common modes of transmission for these viruses include receipt of contaminated blood or blood products, invasive medical procedures using contaminated equipment and for hepatitis B transmission from mother to baby at birth, from family member to child, and also by sexual contact. Acute infection may occur with limited or no symptoms, or may include symptoms such as jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), dark urine, extreme fatigue, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. It is estimated that there are more than 300 million carriers of the hepatitis B virus in the world, with over 500,000 dying annually from hepatitis B-related liver disease. Several medications are available for the treatment of chronic hepatitis B, and hepatitis B infection can be prevented by vaccination. Hepatitis B vaccines are safe and highly effective in preventing hepatitis B infection and are now given routinely to newborns and children in the United States and in many other countries. World Hepatitis Day is July 28th. In order to raise awareness of this hidden epidemic, the World Health Assembly and the President of the United States designated July 28th as World Hepatitis Day in 2011. Organizations around the world, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and CDC, are using this 2nd annual World Hepatitis Day to raise awareness of the problem and what needs to be done to strengthen efforts in prevention, screening and control of viral hepatitis. Viral hepatitis is a major health issue around the world, including in the United States. Since many people with chronic hepatitis often do not have symptoms until serious liver damage has occurred, testing for hepatitis is crucial. Viral hepatitis can be prevented. Since the creation of the hepatitis B vaccine in 1969, hepatitis B vaccination now ranks as our most effective tool for the prevention of viral hepatitis. Implementation of routine infant vaccination for hepatitis B, for instance, has drastically decreased rates of new infection in some areas. Hepatitis B vaccine is now offered to children in at least 178 countries worldwide and global coverage has reached approximately 70%. This level of protection will prevent over 700,000 future deaths from cirrhosis and liver cancer for babies born each year.