

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY 2025 - FACT SHEET

28 JULY

THEME: “HEPATITIS: LET’S BREAK IT DOWN”

Introduction

Every year on **28 July**, World Hepatitis Day raises awareness of viral hepatitis, a group of infectious diseases that affects the liver and causes over **1.3 million deaths annually**. This year’s global theme “**Hepatitis: Let’s Break It Down**”, calls on all stakeholders to dismantle the barriers that prevent millions of people, especially women and girls, from accessing prevention, testing, and treatment services.

This fact sheet presents the latest data, outlines why hepatitis is a gendered issue, and highlights how adolescent girls and young women can take part in shaping a response that is **inclusive, equitable, and transformative**.

What Is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis refers to inflammation of the liver, often caused by **viral infections**—especially hepatitis B and C, which can become chronic and lead to **liver failure, cirrhosis, or cancer**.

- **Hepatitis B (HBV):** Transmitted via blood, unprotected sex, and from mother to child during childbirth. Preventable with a vaccine.

- **Hepatitis C (HCV):** Spread through unsafe blood or injections. Curable with direct-acting antiviral (DAA) treatment.

Global Overview

- **304 million** people are living with chronic hepatitis B or C.
- **Only 10%** of people with HBV and **30%** of people with HCV have been diagnosed.
- Over **1.3 million people** die from hepatitis-related causes each year—one death every **30 seconds**.
- Many infections are **undiagnosed and untreated**, especially among women, youth, migrants, and key populations.

Source: WHO Global Hepatitis Report 2024

Prevention and Treatment

Hepatitis B:

- **Safe and effective vaccine** available. The **birth dose** within 24 hours of delivery is critical.
- Antiviral treatment controls infection but does not cure it.

Hepatitis C:

- No vaccine yet, but treatment with **DAAs cures more than 95%** of cases in 8–12 weeks.
- **Early diagnosis** is crucial to prevent complications and reduce transmission.

WHO Priorities for 2025:

- Universal access to **testing and diagnosis**.
- Expanded coverage of **birth-dose vaccination**.
- Integration of services into **primary health care** and **antenatal care**.

Why Hepatitis is a Gender Issue

Although hepatitis affects people of all genders, its impact is often **worsened by gender inequality**.

Barriers Facing Women and Girls:

- **Limited access** to testing and vaccines, particularly in rural areas.
- **Low awareness** of transmission risks and rights to services.
- Lack of **integrated services** in maternal and sexual and reproductive health care.
- **Stigma and discrimination** in health systems—especially for adolescent girls, sex workers, and LGBTQ+ youth.

Gender-Specific Risks:

- **Mother-to-child transmission** remains a major concern. Without timely intervention, infants born to HBV-positive mothers face high risk of infection.
- **Women living with HIV** are more vulnerable to hepatitis and often excluded from integrated care.

A Gender-Transformative Response

To achieve the goal of eliminating hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030, responses must go beyond gender-blind or gender - sensitive approaches. W4GF calls for **gender -transformative strategies that:**

- 1** Ensure access to the HBV vaccine and testing for all girls and women, including adolescent girls and pregnant women.
- 2** Integrate hepatitis services into SRHR, HIV programs, and maternal care.
- 3** Collect and use gender-disaggregated data to identify service gaps and monitor progress.
- 4** Train health workers on gender equity and respectful, non-stigmatizing care.
- 5** Support community-led advocacy by girls, women, and key populations to ensure accountability.

What Adolescent Girls and Young Women Can Do

You are powerful advocates for change.

- Educate yourself and your peers about hepatitis, how it spreads, how it's prevented, and why it matters.
- Ask for testing if you're unsure of your status. Hepatitis often has no symptoms.
- Speak up if your clinic or health provider does not offer vaccines or information.
- Join campaigns to make hepatitis services youth-friendly, gender-transformative, and rights-based.
- Advocate with your local leaders to invest in hepatitis elimination and fund programs that reach adolescent girls and key populations.

Type of Barrier	What it looks like	What we need
Financial	No free testing, treatment, or vaccines	Include hepatitis in universal health coverage
Social	Shame, silence, misinformation	Public education, peer-led outreach
Structural	Lack of services in SRHR or youth clinics	Integrate hepatitis into all relevant health services



W4GF'S CALL TO ACTION

As part of our commitment to **gender equality and the right to health**, W4GF urges all stakeholders, governments, funders, health institutions, and communities to:

- Make **gender equality central** to hepatitis policy and programming
- **Invest in community-led advocacy** and movement-building
- **Eliminate stigma and discrimination** that prevent access to services

We cannot end hepatitis without ending inequality

Let's break it down, together, so that every girl and young woman, no matter where she lives or who she is, can access the care, protection, and respect she deserves.

This 28 July, raise your voice and demand a world free of hepatitis

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