

[DH reminds people with chronic hepatitis B to have regular examinations and medical follow-ups](#)

In support of World Hepatitis Day 2024 (July 28) designated by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Department of Health (DH) has enhanced publicity with the theme "Managing hepatitis B for healthy living", aiming to raise awareness of viral hepatitis and remind people with chronic hepatitis B (CHB) to have regular examinations and receive treatments and medical follow-ups for disease management.

As derived from the results of the [Thematic Report on Viral Hepatitis \(Population Health Survey \(PHS\) 2020-22\)](#), published by the DH last year, about 5.6 per cent of the Hong Kong population, which is about 410 000 people, have CHB. The PHS 2020-22 also revealed that nearly 40 per cent of people with CHB were not aware of their disease and about 70 per cent of people with CHB did not have any medical follow-up for their liver diseases. This revealed a substantial proportion of persons with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection are unaware of, or are attaching little importance to, their hepatitis condition.

A spokesman for the DH said, "CHB is a lifelong infection that may remain asymptomatic for decades until the liver is severely damaged. About 15 to 40 per cent of untreated people with CHB may progress to life-threatening liver diseases such as cirrhosis and liver cancer. In Hong Kong, liver cancer was the third-leading cause of cancer deaths which claimed 1 412 lives in 2022. There are local studies showing that the majority of liver cancer cases were related to CHB.

"People with CHB should have regular examinations and follow-ups for early detection and management of changes in their liver condition. Doctors will assess the conditions of each person with CHB to determine when oral antiviral medication, which can inhibit HBV replication effectively and thereby greatly reduce the risk of cirrhosis and liver cancer, is needed," the spokesman added.

Members of the public with unknown infection and immune status of hepatitis B, particularly those at a higher risk of HBV infection such as family members (including parents, siblings and offspring) and sexual partners of people with CHB, should also consult family doctors for hepatitis B testing and take necessary measures to prevent HBV infection, including receiving hepatitis B vaccination as applicable.

Early identification and management of people with CHB is one of the focus areas of the [Hong Kong Viral Hepatitis Action Plan 2020 – 2024](#) (the Action Plan), which was launched in October 2020. The Action Plan sets out a comprehensive strategy, which includes piloting a model on service

collaboration between Medicine Specialist Out-patient Clinics and Family Medicine Specialist Clinics in some clusters of the Hospital Authority (HA) for strengthening care. The role of primary healthcare in strengthening hepatitis B care will be further explored. The DH, HA and the Primary Healthcare Commission will continue to promote the Action Plan based on relevant service outcomes to reduce the transmission and disease burden of viral hepatitis in advancing progressively towards the target of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat.

â€œFor information on World Hepatitis Day 2024 and hepatitis B, please visit the [thematic website](#) and [Viral Hepatitis Control Office's website](#) of the DH.