

Efforts are on to contain hepatitis B, says health ministry

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Health ministry: Efforts on to contain Hepatitis B



Since April 2005, the Government of India has introduced auto-disabled (AD) syringes for all vaccinations under the Universal Immunization Program (UIP) in all states. AD syringes are single use, self-locking syringes that cannot be used more than once. This prevents misuse and contamination/ cross infection through repeated use of non sterile injection/equipment. The routine screening of blood units for Hepatitis B & C has been made mandatory for all blood banks to detect and discard contaminated blood units. Under the UIP, government of India is providing Hepatitis B vaccine and operational cost of vaccination to states/ UTs for preventing hepatitis B infection.

As per the information provided by Union Health Minister, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad in the Parliament on March 19, 2013, the Universal Immunization Program (UIP) of Government of India is providing hepatitis B vaccine and operational cost of vaccination to states/ UTs for preventing hepatitis B infection.

"National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, provides technical guidance to state governments on prevention and control of water borne diseases including hepatitis, and helps them in carrying out investigation of such diseases under Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP) within the overall framework of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). NCDC also coordinates laboratory support for outbreak investigations and etiological diagnosis besides conducting regular training courses for development of trained manpower," added the minister.

There are five main hepatitis viruses, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E. 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. Hepatitis B is also transmitted by sexual contact. Since the main cause of Hepatitis A & E is consumption of contaminated water, the Government of India supports state governments/ local bodies in ensuring supply of safe drinking water through National Rural Drinking Water Program (NRDWP) and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).