WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VIRAL HEPATITIS

WHAT IS THE DANGER OF HEPATITIS?
On exposure to hepatitis B virus, 90 to 95% of adults are able to clear the virus from their body through their natural defense system and do not get hepatitis again. The remaining 5 to 10% individuals are unable to clear the virus and over long time period can suffer from liver damage called as chronic hepatitis.

In case of Hepatitis C, around 80% only can clear the virus whereas rest 20% progress over many years to develop chronic hepatitis and scarring of liver called as cirrhosis. In both the hepatitis, these individuals are called as carriers of virus and should not donate blood lifelong as the virus can be transmissible from their donated blood to blood recipients who can then contract the disease.

WHO REQUIRES TREATMENT?
People who have the infection for longer than six months may be considered for treatment with anti-viral drugs. Hepatitis B or C ‘Positive’ individuals need evaluation by a doctor, periodic liver function tests, ultra-sonography of liver to detect if their liver is damaged and whether treatment is necessary.

WHAT IS VIRAL HEPATITIS?
- Hepatitis is a disease caused by hepatitis viruses A, B, C, D or E which can damage your liver.
- Hepatitis A and E are transmitted through contaminated food & water.
- Hepatitis B, C and D viruses are transmitted through sexual contact, mother to child transmission during delivery, use of unsterile needles for IV drug use, tattooing, body piercing or accidental finger prick and sometimes through blood transfusions.

WHAT FUTURE CARE SHOULD I TAKE IF I AM HEPATITIS B OR C POSITIVE?
- Consult a doctor and get more information on hepatitis.
- Do not donate blood lifelong.
- Do not share tooth brushes, razors or other personal care items that might have your blood on them.
- Use disposable needles and sets for procedures.
- Practice safe disposal of blood soaked sanitary pads.
- Practice safe sex and have your sex partner/spouse tested and vaccinated for hepatitis B.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Tell your doctor about all medicines that you are taking for any illness.
- All pregnant women should be tested for Hepatitis B so that the infant of those who test positive can be immunized immediately at birth. For those who test negative, their infants should be given hepatitis B vaccination.

HEPATITIS VIRUS IS NOT KNOWN TO BE TRANSMITTED BY:
- Sitting next to an infected person.
- Sharing cutlery or crockery.
- Swimming in public pools.
- Using public lavatories.
- Casual contact / hugging.

HOW CAN BLOOD BANK HELP YOU AS A BLOOD DONOR?
All donated blood units are mandatorily tested for Hepatitis B and C.
- If your donated blood tests positive for Hepatitis B or/and Hepatitis C
  - You will be informed about the result and counseled. Sometimes new blood sample will be taken for retesting and sent to reference laboratory.
  - You will be referred to a doctor for further medical advice and counselling.

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