



BACKGROUNDERS

Press Information Bureau

Government of India

India's Fight to Combat Hepatitis

July 27, 2026

India is systematically breaking down healthcare barriers to achieve its 2030 goal of combating hepatitis. National Viral Hepatitis Control Program has adopted a health systems approach and integrated with various national programs to prevent infection and provide services including free drugs and diagnostics to the people affected with the disease.

What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, caused by hepatitis viruses or even other infections, toxic substances such as alcohol and drugs, and autoimmune diseases. There are five main hepatitis viruses, of which type B and type C are the most common and lead to chronic disease including cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Hepatitis has been recognised as a public health problem in India. In 2018, the Government launched the **National Viral Hepatitis Program** to combat this disease by providing screening and treatment services. This is in line with United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal of combating various viral diseases.

NATIONAL VIRAL HEPATITIS PROGRAM



About **21.06 crore** beneficiaries screened



- Hepatitis B & C patients treated: **~6.12 lakh**
- Treatment provided across **1,153 treatment** sites across the country

राष्ट्रीय वायरल हेपेटाइटिस निदान कार्यक्रम

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

(till March 2026)

Modes of Transmission, Prevention and Management

Hepatitis Virus	Causes / Transmission	Prevention & Treatment
Hepatitis A (HAV)	• Faecal-oral route via contaminated food/water • Poor sanitation and lack of safe drinking water	• Prevention: Safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation measures • Treatment: Usually Self-limiting. Supportive care (hydration/nutrition). No specific antiviral
Hepatitis B (HBV)	• Most commonly: Mother-to-child at birth • Contact with infected blood and blood products and body fluids etc	• Prevention: Vaccine preventable disease. Hepatitis B Vaccine under the Universal Immunization Program (birth dose at the earliest and certainly within 24 hours of birth, at 6,10 and 14 weeks of birth) • Treatment: Chronic hepatitis B is managed with antiviral medication amongst those eligible as per the national guidelines
Hepatitis C (HCV)	• Exposure to blood from unsafe injections/procedures • Sharing needles/syringes	• Prevention: Adopting harm reduction measures (needle exchange), safe injection practices. There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C infection

	• Contact with infected blood and blood products and body fluids etc	• Treatment: Cured in 12-24 weeks in nearly all patients using pan-genotypic regimen with Direct-Acting Antiviral (DAAs) drugs
<i>Hepatitis D (HDV)</i>	• Contact with infected blood and blood products and body fluids etc • Infection only amongst some chronic HBV carriers	• Prevention: By preventing the underlying HBV infection, the Hepatitis B vaccine concurrently confers full protection against HDV infection
<i>Hepatitis E (HEV)</i>	• Faecal-oral route via contaminated food/water • Poor sanitation and lack of safe drinking water	• Prevention: Safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation measures • Treatment: Usually Self-limiting. Supportive care (hydration/nutrition). No specific antiviral drugs

National Viral Hepatitis Control Program& Others

The key strategies adopted under the NVHCP include **preventive, promotive and curative interventions** with the focus on awareness generation, increasing access, providing diagnosis and treatment for viral hepatitis to all in need.

The **NVHCP** program deals with Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E viruses.

- Hepatitis A and E are usually acute, symptomatic and outbreak prone and monitored through **Integrated Disease Surveillance Program**.
- Free diagnostics and drugs are being made available to all in need, for management of hepatitis C and hepatitis B.
- The program uses paperless system of recording and reporting for patient management and monitoring through NVHCP-MIS portal.

Seroprevalence is the share of people who test positive for a disease in a sample survey. In India's 2021 HIV Sentinel Surveillance data, about 0.85% of people tested positive for **Hepatitis B** and 0.29% for **Hepatitis C** — roughly **1 in 118 and 1 in 345 people, respectively**.

The government runs various national health programs that also help in the prevention and treatment of the disease.

- **Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health and Nutrition program:**
 - Universal screening of pregnant women for Hepatitis B.
 - Universal Immunisation Program
 - To ensure 100% hepatitis B birth dose to all newborns and Hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) to newborns of positive pregnant women along with hepatitis B birth dose within 24 hours of birth
- **National AIDS Control Program (NACP):** Screening of high-risk groups for hepatitis B and C either through facility or outreach.
- Hepatitis B vaccination of healthcare workers and hepatitis B screened negative HRGs for infection prevention
- **National Tuberculosis Elimination Program (NTEP):** Use of existing machines under NTEP for molecular testing.
- **Blood Transfusion services:** Linkage of Hepatitis B/C positive donors for further management.

The program also has its **toll-free number (1800-11-6666)** shared with the NTEP which provides general information about the infection, its prevention, modes of transmission, management and the various service delivery sites strengthened under the program across the country.

Combating Hepatitis

Since 2018, India's National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme has offered free screening and treatment for Hepatitis B and C nationwide. Smart use of local funding, cheaper generic drugs, and existing health programs has helped expand this care further. Services are now moving from district hospitals down to local health centers, bringing testing and treatment closer to everyone. This reflects the spirit of **Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas** — collective effort for inclusive growth, reaching every citizen.

References

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:

- Seroprevalence of hepatitis B and hepatitis C (based on HIV Sentinel Surveillance, plus 2021) Report 2023.
- https://nvhcp.mohfw.gov.in/about_us

Others:

- <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-hepatitis-day/2026>
- <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/hepatitis>

- <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hepatitis-d>

PIB Research Unit