

# Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

Media Release  
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## **World Hepatitis Day is July 28<sup>th</sup> – Do you know your status?**

July 28th is World Hepatitis Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about viral hepatitis. This year, Canada's World Hepatitis Day slogan is: "Know your status? Get tested – Learn your options".

Viral hepatitis affects more than half a million Canadians and more than 500 million people worldwide. Many Canadians are unaware that they have hepatitis and unknowingly spread the virus to other people. Hepatitis B and C can be spread by exposure to contaminated blood or bodily fluids containing blood through the sharing of: needles, pipes, unsterile body piercing and tattoo equipment, and personal hygiene items, such as razors.

Hepatitis is incorrectly stigmatized as an IV drug-users' disease, a sexually transmitted disease and/or an alcoholic's disease, and few people realize that it takes only blood-to-blood transmission to pass it on - something as simple as sharing personal hygiene items such as razors and toothbrushes, or by using non-sterile equipment for tattoos, body piercing, haircutting, injection drugs or medical procedures.

The focus of the World Hepatitis Day campaign is to raise public awareness. We urge everyone to learn about the risk factors involved in hepatitis B and C and the need for testing if they think they might have been infected. Treatment is available.

If you think you may be at risk, ask to be tested. For more information visit <http://www.catie.ca/en/whd>

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