

# Spotlight on Hepatitis Prevention Programs at the Orange County Health Department

In June 2007, the Orange County Health Department (OCHD) was awarded funds from the Florida Hepatitis and Liver Failure Prevention and Control Program to begin a comprehensive hepatitis prevention program. This program is located within the OCHD's Epidemiology Department. The **Hepatitis Prevention Program's** services include: providing hepatitis education and

screening, hepatitis A and B vaccinations, counseling, and referrals for follow-up care of high-risk individuals.

People who should get tested for chronic hepatitis B include: persons born in Asia, Africa and other regions where there is intermediate or high rates of hepatitis B (see map), unvaccinated people whose parents are from regions with high

rates of hepatitis B, a sexual partner of a person infected with hepatitis B, people who live with someone who is infected with hepatitis B, men who have sexual contact with other men, injection drug users, all pregnant women, people with HIV or AIDS, and persons with medical conditions who receive immunosuppressive therapy such as hemodialysis or chemotherapy.

Geographic Distribution of Chronic HBV Infection — Worldwide, 2006\*



\* For multiple countries, estimates of prevalence of hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg), a marker of chronic HBV infection, are based on limited data and might not reflect current prevalence in countries that have implemented childhood hepatitis B vaccination. In addition, HBsAg prevalence might vary within countries by subpopulation and locality.

Source: CDC. Travellers' Health; Yellow Book. <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbookch4-HepB.aspx>.

Services provided through the Hepatitis Prevention Program are not for international travel, employee health, or persons under the age of 18. Through this program, OCHD is collaborating with community agencies that serve those at risk to provide free hepatitis testing and hepatitis A and B vaccines. The health department also provides referrals for treatment for those diagnosed with hepatitis and participates in outreach activities, including community health fairs that target at-risk communities. Testing and vaccinations for hepatitis are offered, by appointment, for people at risk for infection. Interested persons should call Lori Theisen at 407-858-1400 X 1135 to make an appointment.

**Another initiative is the Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program which strives to prevent the transmission of hepatitis B to newborns.** All pregnant women should be tested for the hepatitis B virus because the virus can be passed on to newborns during delivery. If a

woman already has hepatitis B, the baby can be protected from developing the disease if a schedule of preventive shots is followed. This includes: hepatitis B vaccine and the hepatitis B immune globulin within the first 12 hours of life, 2 additional doses of the vaccine during the first 6 months, and a follow-up blood test at 9 months to ensure protection was established. Your doctor should make arrangements to have the proper medications in the delivery room to prevent your newborn from becoming infected with the hepatitis B virus. This is important because chronic hepatitis B infection occurs in 90% of newborn infants infected at birth. However, if babies get the appropriate shots, they have a 95% chance of being safe from hepatitis B for life.

The OCHD Perinatal Hepatitis B Prevention Program assists pregnant women who test positive for the hepatitis B virus. The goal of the program is to prevent transmission of the disease to the newborn through:

- Education and counseling
- Free blood testing and hepatitis B vaccine to significant contacts
- Case management of newborns
- Collaboration with private providers and hospitals

If you are interested in information specific to pregnancy and hepatitis B, please contact Valerie Harvard at 407-858-1400 X 1131.

If you are interested in learning more about hepatitis B, or if you would like a speaker for your group or organization, please contact Jessica Fung at [Jessica\\_fung@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Jessica_fung@doh.state.fl.us) or 407-858-1400 X 1351.

