

# HEPATITIS HEALTH



Yes, that's really President Bush with Dr. Mark Asperilla.



Photo by Jonathan Fredin

## HOPE CLINIC NOW OPEN IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY!

The Charlotte County Health Department (CCHD) proudly opened its doors to the long-awaited HOPE Clinic for chronic hepatitis C treatment. After several months of finalizing details and screening potential candidates, the clinic saw its first group of clients this past September.

Chronic hepatitis C is the most frequently reported notifiable condition in Charlotte County, with close to 300 newly diagnosed cases so far this year. With an increasing burden of disease and limited resources for treatment, many Charlotte County residents with hepatitis C cannot access care. The HOPE Clinic will provide treatment options for individuals who may not otherwise get the care they need.

The HOPE Clinic grew from a partnership among several organizations including the CCHD, Charlotte County Medical Society, St. Vincent DePaul Community Pharmacy, and the Board of Charlotte County Commissioners. This collaboration has resulted in an affordable program to help clients access what is usually a very costly treatment plan.

The clinic provides most medications and lab work free of charge. HOPE Clinic clients are only responsible for the cost of the clinic visit, which is based on a sliding fee scale. Volunteer physicians like **Dr. Mark Asperilla**, who was heavily involved in the planning and creation of the clinic, care for clients enrolled in the treatment program.

Although they may accept out-of-county clients, those residing outside Charlotte County will be responsible for additional charges including all lab work. For more information about the HOPE Clinic, please call (941) 639-1181 extension 2255.



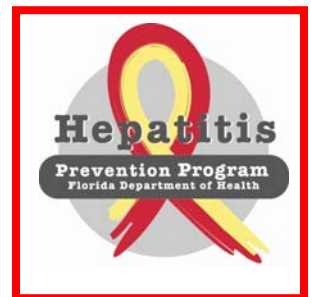
[www.CharlotteCHD.com](http://www.CharlotteCHD.com)



Charlotte County Health Department  
Leading the Way to a Healthier and Safer Community

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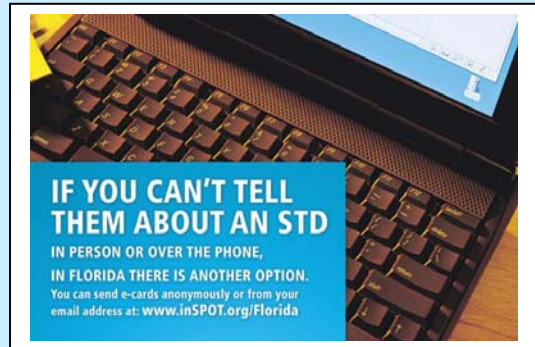
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**Name that tune!**

“What a long, strange trip it’s been.”

Answer on page 6



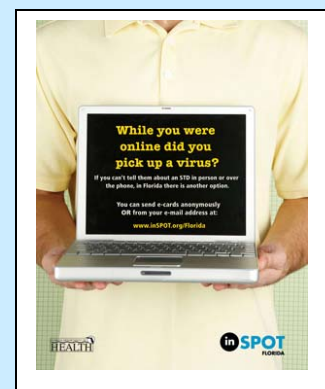
## DOH Introduces inSPOT.org/Florida

Internet notification services for partners exposed to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, are now available in Florida; inSPOT.org/Florida offers Floridians the option to send e-cards either anonymously or from their own email addresses to partners.

“Sexually transmitted diseases impact local communities and bring the potential for long-term negative health outcomes for individuals who go undiagnosed and untreated,” said DOH Bureau Chief, **Karla Schmitt**, Ph.D., M.P.H., A.R.N.P., “Prevention and early detection are important components in the control and elimination of these diseases.”

The inability to contact partners significantly limits services that can be provided. With the addition of inSPOT.org/Florida to current partner notification services, the Bureau of STD Prevention and Control will be able to reach a demographic that has been virtually unknown and bring them to treatment. This website will complement traditional STD partner notification services.

To access inSPOT.org/Florida, please visit [www.inSPOT.org/Florida](http://www.inSPOT.org/Florida). For more information on STDs in Florida, go to the Bureau of STD website at [www.doh.state.fl.us/disease\\_ctrl/std/index.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/std/index.html).



# easy C facts

Hepatitis C Support Project  
www.hcvadvocate.org

Not everyone with hepatitis C (HCV for short) has the same kind. In fact, there are six different kinds of HCV. These different kinds are called **genotypes** and are numbered 1 to 6. Some genotypes have further divisions called **subtypes** (for example, 1a and 1b).

Knowing which genotype you have is really important to your doctor because *different genotypes respond differently to treatment*. For example genotype 1 is a little harder to treat than genotypes 2 or 3, and treating type 1 HCV requires different doses of medicine than treating types 2 or 3.

Just because you have a certain genotype does not mean that you will get less or more sick, but some genotypes (type 3, for example) have been linked with certain conditions, such as fatty liver.

It is important to remember that most people with hepatitis C never develop symptoms—no matter which type they have.

## Hepatitis C Genotype

*Genotype information is important because it helps predict treatment response, length of treatment needed, and the dose of ribavirin.*

Knowing your HCV **genotype** is important for a couple of reasons:

*First:* If you decide to go on treatment, **genotype tests** will tell you the chances of getting rid of the virus.

*Second:* **Genotype tests** will tell your doctor how much medicine to give you and for how long.

**REMEMBER:** Just because you have this or that genotype does not mean you will become more or less ill.



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## HEPATITIS C: HOW COMMON IS SEXUAL TRANSMISSION?

Mayo Clinic infectious disease specialist [James Steckelberg, M.D.](#), and colleagues answer select questions from readers.

Hepatitis C is transmitted primarily by exposure to blood infected with the hepatitis C virus. Transmission rarely occurs from exposure to other infected body fluids, such as semen.

If you're in a long-term, monogamous relationship with a partner who has hepatitis C, your risk of sexual transmission is 0 percent to 0.6 percent per year. For monogamous couples, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) doesn't recommend routine condom use to prevent transmission. But couples should avoid sharing razors, toothbrushes and nail clippers.

The risk of transmission is slightly higher — about 1 percent per year — if you're involved in a short-term sexual relationship with someone who has hepatitis C. This risk increases if your partner is also infected with HIV. Under these circumstances, the CDC recommends routine condom use to reduce your risk of transmission.

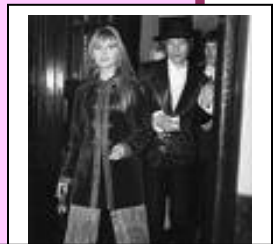
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hepatitis-c/AN00701>

## SINGER MARIANNE FAITHFULL REVEALS SHE HAS HEPATITIS C

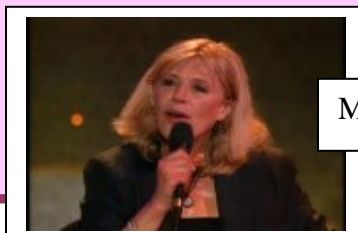
**Marianne Faithfull**, 60, let slip that she had the virus while discussing her recent treatment for breast cancer on Britain's ITV1's *This Morning* program. "I found out about 12 years ago," she told host **Phillip Schofield**, adding she had received treatment at the time.

Faithfull, a former heroin addict, made no link between the risks she took in her youth and her having the virus. However, she admitted she had taken "a lot of risks." "I was incredibly lucky," she said. "I shouldn't be alive, I know that."

The gravelly-voiced Faithfull first found fame in the 1960s as the muse of Rolling Stones lead singer **Mick Jagger**. She is probably best known for her recording of the song "As Tears Go By."



Faithfull and Jagger



Marianne Faithfull today

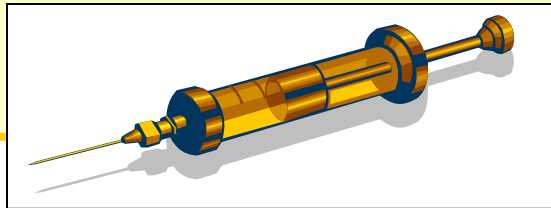


## ALTERNATIVE DOSING SCHEDULE FOR COMBINED HEPATITIS A AND B VACCINE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published "Notice to Readers: FDA Approval of an Alternative Dosing Schedule for a Combined Hepatitis A and B Vaccine (Twinrix)" in the October 12, 2007, issue of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

In April 2007, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved GlaxoSmithKline Vaccine Division's (GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania) alternate schedule for Twinrix, a combined hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccine. FDA first licensed Twinrix in 2001 on a 3-dose schedule (0, 1, and 6 months) for vaccination of persons aged  $\geq 18$  years. Using the newly licensed, alternate 4-dose schedule, Twinrix doses can be administered at 0, 7, and 21-30 days, followed by a dose at 12 months.

\*Note from Immunization Action Coalition (IAC): The alternative schedule could benefit individuals traveling to high-risk areas; emergency responders, especially those being deployed to disaster areas overseas; and others who are at risk for hepatitis A and B infection.



## UPDATED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTION OF HEPATITIS A VIRUS INFECTION AFTER EXPOSURE AND BEFORE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

The CDC published "Update: Prevention of Hepatitis A After Exposure to Hepatitis A Virus and in International Travelers. Updated Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices" in the October 19, 2007, issue of MMWR.

In addition, on October 18, the CDC website posted a Q&A about the revised recommendations, and the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM; issue dated 10/25/07) published a related article, "Hepatitis A Vaccine versus Immune Globulin for Postexposure Prophylaxis," and an editorial, "Another Success for Hepatitis A Vaccine."

To access a web-text (HTML) version of the complete article, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5641a3.htm>

## THE CATCH 22 OF CONDOMS IN US CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Tucker JD, Chang SW, Tulsy JP

Full text <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/7/296>



### Background

Despite the high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV infection in US correctional settings, most jails and prisons in the United States prevent inmates from using condoms to prevent STIs/HIV.

### Discussion

This article makes the following arguments to justify a scalable and feasible next step in the prevention of HIV/STIs among inmates: condoms are a basic and essential part of HIV/STI prevention, HIV/STI transmission occurs in the context of corrections, and several model programs show the feasibility of condom distribution in prisons. A lower end estimate for HIV incidence among incarcerated applied to 2,000,000 new inmates annually results in thousands of new HIV infections acquired each year in corrections that could be prevented with condoms in corrections facilities. Programs from parts of the United States, Canada, and much of Europe show how programs distributing condoms in correctional facilities can be safe and effective.

### Summary

Public health and corrections officials must work together to ensure that condoms and broader sexual disease prevention programs are integrated into US jail and prison health systems.

## ANSWER TO TRIVIA QUESTION FROM PAGE 1

**Truckin'** by the Grateful Dead, which first appeared on their 1970 album *American Beauty*. Written by band members **Jerry Garcia, Bob Weir, Phil Lesh, and lyricist Robert Hunter**, **Truckin'** molds classic Grateful Dead rhythms and instrumentation with lyrics that use the band's misfortunes on the road as a metaphor for getting through the constant changes in life.

*American Beauty* is the fifth album by the Grateful Dead. It was originally released in November of 1970.

In 1998 bass guitar player **Phil Lesh** underwent a liver transplant as a result of chronic hepatitis C infection; since then, he has become an outspoken advocate for organ donor programs, and when performing, regularly encourages members of the audience to become organ donors.



## NATIONAL LATINO AIDS AWARENESS DAY



The Florida Department of Health (DOH) recognized October 15, 2007 as the fifth annual observance of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day. This year's theme, "*Wake Up! Take Control! Take the HIV Test,*" highlighted the critical role of HIV testing and prevention education in stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS in Latino communities. October 15th was the final day of Hispanic Heritage Month in the United States.

"Despite improvements in the general population's overall health over the past decade, Latinos still suffer from an unequal burden of disease and death," **State Surgeon General Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.** said. "National Latino AIDS Awareness Day encourages all Floridians, especially Latinos, to get tested for HIV and helps Floridians access the information needed to take control of one's health."

Between 1999 and 2006, HIV cases diagnosed among Latinos increased by 13 percent, and new HIV cases among Latino males increased by 21 percent. In 2005, HIV was the fourth leading cause of death among both Latino men and women, ages 25-44.

"Risk behaviors, complacency, and denial are challenges affecting Latino communities today," **Thomas Liberti**, Chief of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS said. "Fears of disclosure, social stigmas and discrimination have contributed to steady rates of new HIV infections, increasing cases among Latino men who have sex with men, and late diagnoses."

The Florida Department of Health has also partnered with Test for Life to promote the importance of HIV/AIDS testing. Test for Life is a national coalition made up of health/medical professionals, HIV/AIDS and minority advocacy groups, and other community leaders united with the goal of educating the public on the importance of HIV testing.



*Miss Universe spreads news about NLAAD on Univision's "Despierta America" in Miami, FL*

### **The Essential Public Health Services (from [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))**

The **Essential Public Health Services** provide the fundamental framework for the National Public Health Performance Standards Program instruments, by describing the public health activities that should be undertaken in all communities. The Core Public Health Functions Steering Committee developed the framework for the Essential Services in 1994. This steering committee included representatives from US Public Health Service agencies and other major public health organizations. The Essential Services provide a working definition of public health and a guiding framework for the responsibilities of local public health systems.

1. **Monitor** health status to identify and solve community health problems.
2. **Diagnose and investigate** health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. **Inform, educate**, and empower people about health issues.
4. **Mobilize** community partnerships and action to identify and solve health problems.
5. **Develop policies and plans** that support individual and community health efforts.
6. **Enforce** laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. **Link** people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. **Assure** competent public and personal health care workforce.
9. **Evaluate** effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. **Research** for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

S://PUBLIC HEALTH/CDC-10 Essential Public Health Services-2007.doc (11/02/2007)

# easy C facts

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www.hcvadvocate.org

There are many different kinds of blood tests to tell a doctor if the liver is damaged. One of the most common blood test used will measure *alanine aminotransferase (ALT for short)* levels in your blood. ALT's are chemicals that are released by the liver into the blood when the liver is damaged or sick. High levels of ALT can be caused by many things like alcohol, drugs, toxins, and viruses such as hepatitis C (HCV for short).

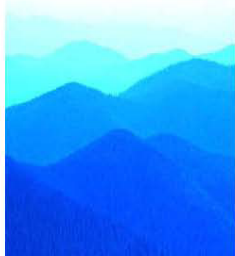
Unfortunately, it is not a perfect test for people with HCV--most people with normal ALT levels will have little damage, but some people can still have on-going liver damage.

In the past, if people with HCV had normal ALT levels, they were not treated with HCV medications, but now doctors will treat hepatitis C with HCV medications if there are other signs that the liver is sick.

**What is ALT?**

*High levels of ALT can be caused by many things like alcohol, drugs, toxins, and viruses such as hepatitis C (HCV).*

## It is important to remember:



◆ If your ALT level is high it means that something is going on in the liver, but it could be caused by many things.

◆ Most people with normal ALT levels will not get sick, but for some people HCV can still be causing damage to the liver.



◆ If you have normal ALT's your doctor will usually not treat with HCV medications unless you have other signs that the liver is damaged.

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Aren't we a fine-looking bunch of bananas? We are the Hepatitis Prevention Program Staff: Kneeling in front is Phil Reichert. Left to Right: April Crowley, Jodi Baldy, Carl McKissick, Nosipho Beaufort and Dena Hall.

**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**  
*Hepatitis Health* is brought to you by the Hepatitis Prevention Program in the Division of Disease Control, Bureau of HIV/AIDS at the Florida Department of Health. We want to know what you are doing in your community to prevent viral hepatitis. Please submit your articles and photos to: [April.Crowley@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:April.Crowley@doh.state.fl.us)

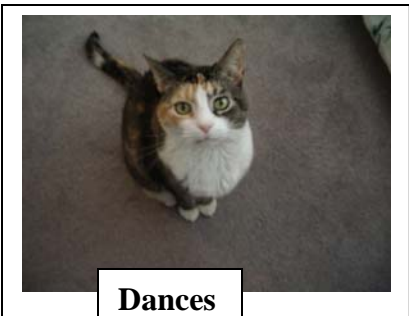
**\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\***  
**HEPATITIS DAY AT THE CAPITOL**  
**Tuesday, March 18, 2008**  
**9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**  
**Third Floor Rotunda**  
**Capitol Building**  
**Tallahassee, Florida**  
**Stay tuned for more details!**

**HEPATITIS PROGRAM WELCOMES DENA HALL**

**Cyndena (Dena) Hall** has joined the Hepatitis Prevention Program as the Special Projects and Research Coordinator. Dena previously worked for 10 years in the Bureau of HIV/AIDS' AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) as the State Program Consultant. Prior to that, she worked for 12 years with the Developmental Services Program, now the Agency for Persons With Disabilities.

Dena is a 1980 graduate of Stetson University in Deland, Florida. (Her mother also went to Stetson, by the way.) She has a B.A. in Social Science. Dena's father started his career at the Pinellas County Health Department in 1958, where he worked until his retirement 39 years later. Mr. Hall worked his way up from Sanitarian to the Director of Environmental Health. As a result, Dena says she "grew up learning all about hepatitis A" whenever her dad investigated hepatitis A outbreaks.

Dena has five pets, not including her boyfriend, Russ. They are She-Who-Dances-with-Plants, a calico cat; Merlin's Magic, a Manx mackerel tabby; Shadow, a Keeshond; and there is Fast Eddie, a Nanday Conure; and Zeus the Almighty, a Chestnut Fronted Macaw.



**Dances**

**Note:** No animals were harmed in the production of this newsletter.



**Shadow**