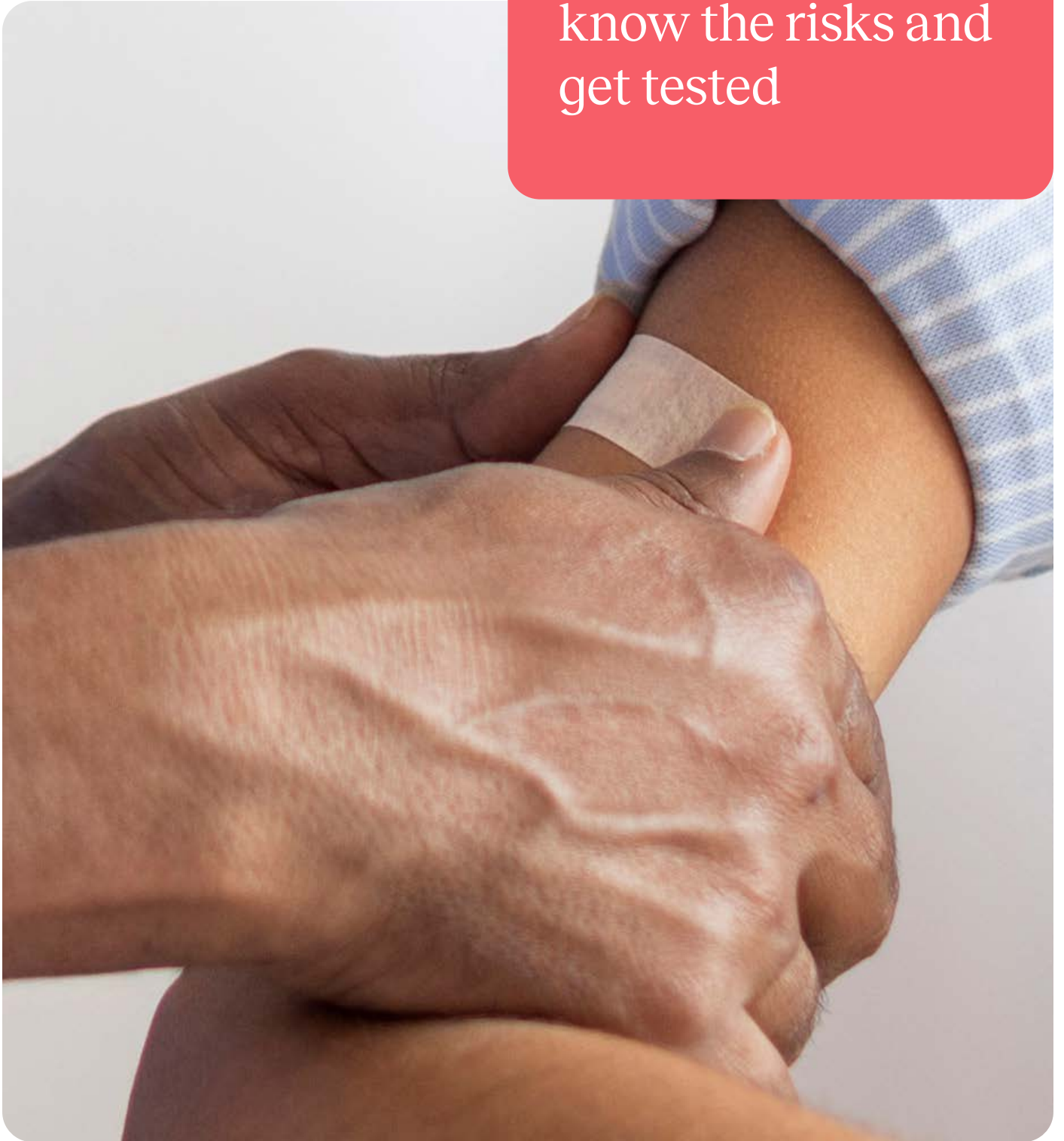


Acting on hepatitis:
know the risks and
get tested



Every 30 seconds, someone dies from a hepatitis-related illness. **World Hepatitis Day on 28th July** is a vital reminder of the health challenges posed by hepatitis. Learn about the **different types of hepatitis**, how they spread, and the **most effective prevention strategies**.

Understanding hepatitis

Hepatitis refers to inflammation of the liver, a key organ responsible for processing nutrients, filtering blood, and fighting infections. The condition can be **temporary (acute)** or **long-term (chronic)** and is mainly caused by **viruses**, although other factors like alcohol use, some medications, and other diseases can also cause hepatitis.

There are five main types of viral hepatitis: **A, B, C, D,** and **E**. Each type has different modes of transmission and can affect the liver differently. Hepatitis A and E are typically caused by **ingesting contaminated food or water**. Hepatitis B, C, and D usually occur because of **contact with infected bodily fluids**, through activities such as **sharing needles, unsafe injection practices,** and **unprotected sex**.

Symptoms to watch for

Many people with hepatitis experience **no symptoms at all** in the early stages. However, when symptoms occur, they may include **jaundice** (yellowing of the skin and eyes), **extreme fatigue,** **nausea, vomiting,** and **abdominal pain**. Chronic hepatitis can lead to more severe problems such as **liver cirrhosis** and **liver cancer**.



How hepatitis spreads

Understanding how hepatitis spreads is crucial in preventing it. Here's a quick look at the transmission routes for each type:

Hepatitis A

Primarily spread through eating **contaminated food** or drinking **contaminated water**. It can also be spread through **sexual contact**, particularly **oral-anal** contact.

Hepatitis B

Transmitted through contact with **infected blood, semen,** and **other body fluids**. This can occur through needle sharing, sharing a toothbrush or razor, from mother to child at birth, unprotected sex, and the use of unsterile medical equipment.

Hepatitis C

Mostly spread through **blood-to-blood contact** such as sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs. It can also be transmitted through **sexual contact**, although this is rare.

Hepatitis D

Only affects people who are **already infected** with hepatitis B, as it's a virus that can only replicate in the presence of hepatitis B. It is spread through direct contact with **infected blood**.

Hepatitis E

Typically spread through consuming **contaminated water** and is somewhat common in developing parts of the world.



Preventing hepatitis

Prevention methods vary depending on the type of hepatitis, but here are some **general tips**:

- Practice good **hygiene** and proper **sanitation** – wash hands regularly.
- Ensure safe **drinking water**.
- Be cautious about **body fluids** and **blood** – do not share needles or personal items like razors or toothbrushes.
- Use **protection** during sex.
- Ensure all medical equipment used on you is **sterilised**.

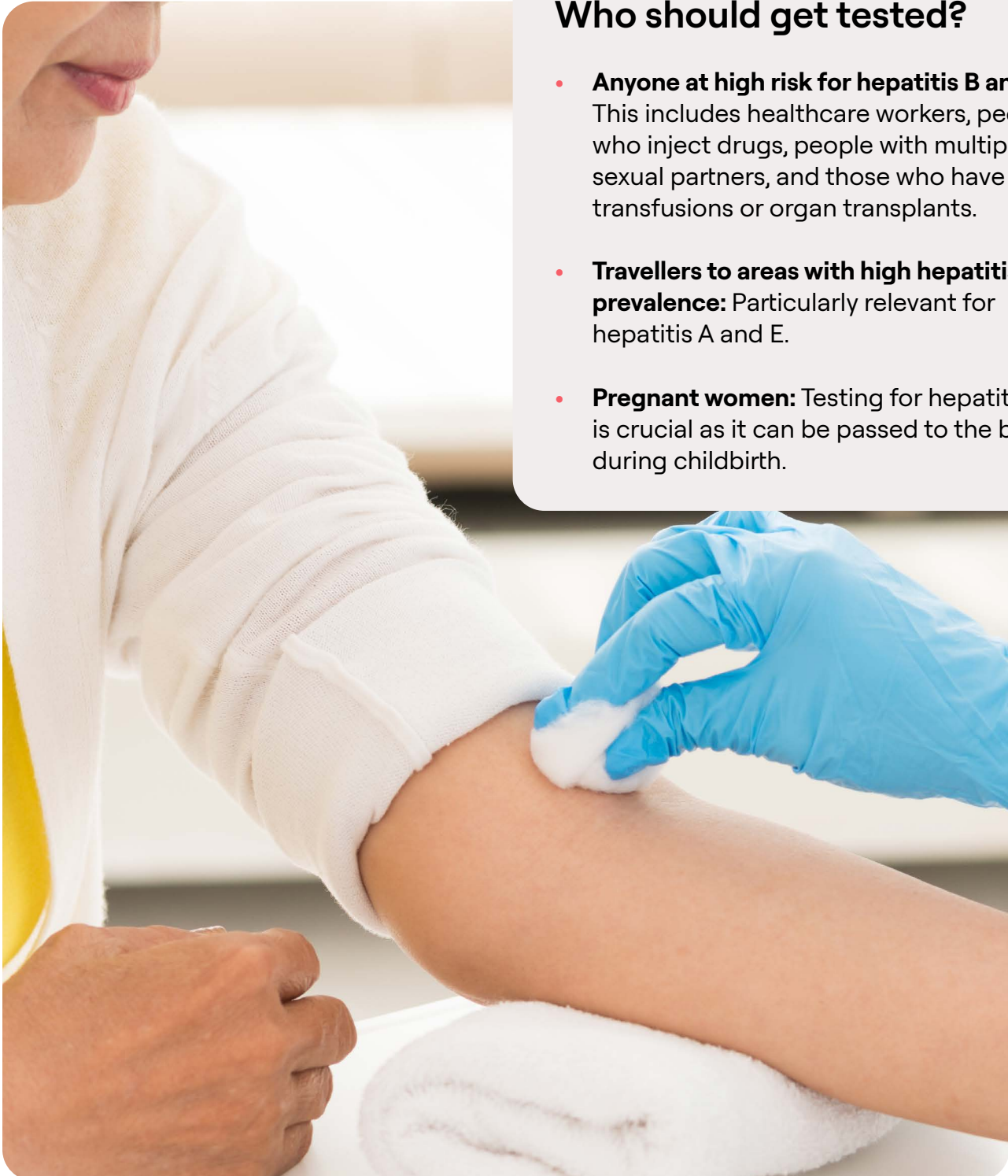
Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent the disease and is recommended for all children and at-risk adults. Vaccines are available for **hepatitis A** and **B**.

The importance of getting tested

Many people with hepatitis are unaware of their condition because they do not show symptoms initially. Early detection through testing is important because it allows for timely treatment that can prevent severe health complications later.

Who should get tested?

- **Anyone at high risk for hepatitis B and C:** This includes healthcare workers, people who inject drugs, people with multiple sexual partners, and those who have had transfusions or organ transplants.
- **Travellers to areas with high hepatitis prevalence:** Particularly relevant for hepatitis A and E.
- **Pregnant women:** Testing for hepatitis B is crucial as it can be passed to the baby during childbirth.



Types of tests

Testing for hepatitis is straightforward. Blood tests can detect the presence of the **virus** or **antibodies** that are produced in response to infection. For hepatitis C, an **RNA test** can also confirm whether the virus is currently active in your body.



Staying informed and safe

Staying informed about hepatitis and understanding the risks associated with each type can lead to **better prevention** and **treatment outcomes**. By knowing how the virus is transmitted, taking appropriate **preventive measures**, and **getting vaccinated**, you can significantly reduce your risk of infection.

Contact **HealthHero** today for more support and advice. We're with you every step of the way.
