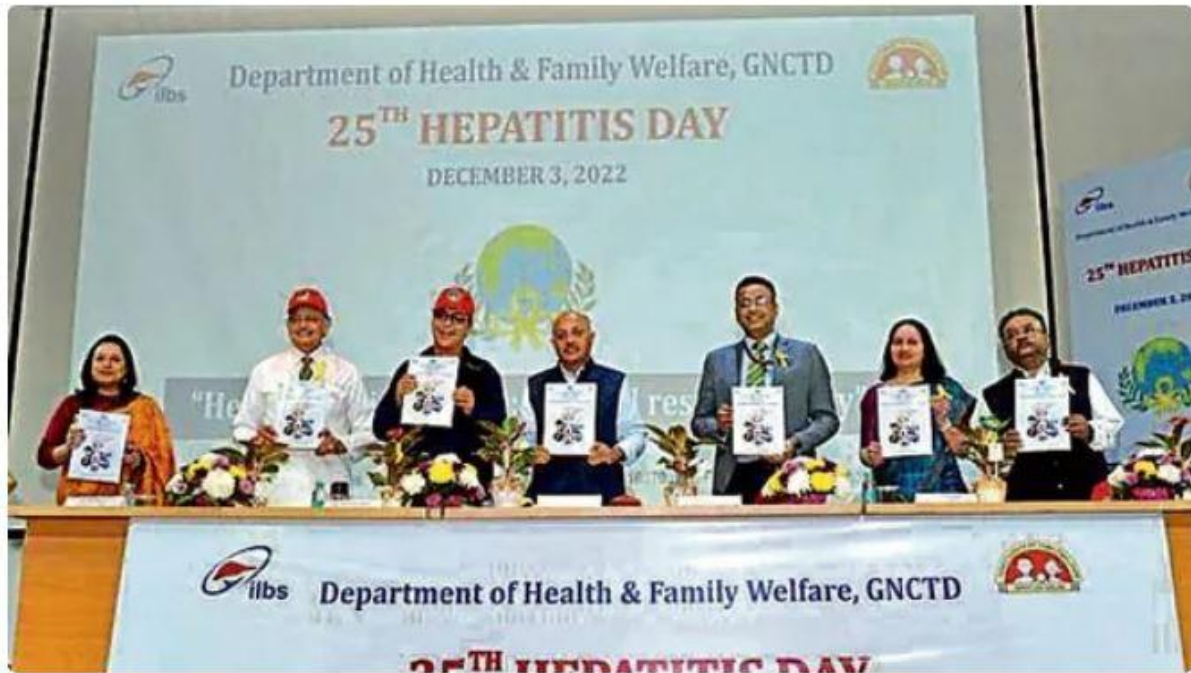


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New plan to reduce Hep-B mother-to-child infection

Dr SK Sarin, vice-chancellor, ILBS, said, “Our aim is to make as many as 100 mothers with Hepatitis B ambassadors of the Womb programme in the next year. They will be educated and will in turn educate other mothers about how a healthy life can be led.”



ILBS will tie up with the Delhi government to rope in more medical institutes to expand the reach of the programme.

By Soumya Pillai, New Delhi, Published on Dec 04, 2022 03:18 AM IST

Marking the 25th year of the ‘yellow ribbon’ campaign, **the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS)** and the Delhi government’s department of health and family welfare launched a special programme on Saturday — winning over mothers with Hepatitis B (Womb) — to spread awareness about mother-to-child transmission of Hepatitis B.

Dr SK Sarin, vice-chancellor, ILBS, said, “Our aim is to make as many as 100 mothers with Hepatitis B ambassadors of the Womb programme in the next year. They will be educated and will in turn educate other mothers about how a healthy life can be led.”

ILBS will tie up with the Delhi government to rope in more medical institutes to expand the reach of the programme, Sarin added.

The ‘yellow ribbon’ campaign, which was launched in 1998, is meant to increase public awareness about viral hepatitis. This year’s theme was Hepatitis elimination: A social responsibility.

Of the total Hepatitis B infections in India, at least 20-30% are mother-to-child transmissions, data shows. Records also show that in at least 90% of cases, the infected mother transfers the infection to her child.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines Hepatitis B as a viral infection that affects liver and can cause both acute and chronic infection.

Chronic infection occurs in the majority (90%) of infants infected by their mothers before five years of age.

“Worldwide, the most common route of transmission of hepatitis B is mother-to-child during birth (vertical transmission) as well as through horizontal early childhood transmission...Transmission from mother to child is more common in children born to women who have a high level of hepatitis B virus in the blood (known as HBV viral load),” a WHO document said.

Health experts said that in the absence of any preventive interventions, the risk of transmission from mother to child ranges from 70% to 90% for mothers with high viral load (or are HBeAg-positive) and from 10% to 40% for those that are HBeAg negative.

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Dr Vandana Bagga, director, directorate of family welfare, said that along with creating awareness, screening of mothers is also important.

“Screening is a very important aspect of early detection of Hepatitis. Apart from that, we are also working on complete immunisation so that no child is left behind,” said Dr Bagga.