

# Hepatitis Shows Marked Increase In Past 10 Years

Infectious hepatitis is an ailment that affects the liver and is an infection that anyone may get, although children and young adults are more susceptible than are older individuals.

However, symptoms of illness tend to be more severe and of longer duration in persons over 30 years of age, and

most of the deaths that occur take place in this age group. The disease is fatal in from two to five per cent of the cases that occur.

Hepatitis has been reportable to U.S. health officials only since 1952, but this period of reporting is long enough to show that the disease is becoming more prevalent — even al-

lowing for the fact that part of the increase may be due to better reporting. Whereas only about 17,000 cases of infectious hepatitis were recorded throughout the nation in 1952, the number that occurred in 1961 was around 73,000.

IN LOS ANGELES County during 1961, hepatitis cases

showed a 15.8 per cent increase over the previous year, but this upward trend is being reversed in 1962. During the first six months of this year, the number of cases reported in this area was about 2.1 per cent less than was reported for the same period in 1961.

Although this is encouraging,

the decline is less than the statewide decrease of 17 per cent for the same period. Why more cases of hepatitis are occurring in Los Angeles County than elsewhere in California is not yet understood.

In addition to known cases, many mild attacks occur that go undetected, particularly in children. As a matter of fact,

it is thought that most people get infectious hepatitis early in life, for adults show greater resistance to the infection than do youngsters.

HEPATITIS, which means inflammation of the liver, is caused by a virus. Chiefly, it spreads directly from person to person but may sometimes

be transmitted through food or water that has been contaminated by a hepatitis patient.

The early symptoms of infectious hepatitis, which appear in from 10 to 40 and most commonly 25 days after infection with the IH virus, resemble those of many other infections and include chills, aches and pains, fever, headache, nausea, and discomfort or tenderness in the upper right section of the abdomen. A yellowing of the skin or eye-balls (jaundice) may or may

not occur as the disease progresses.

There is no specific remedy for hepatitis, and treatment consists principally of bed rest and a properly balanced diet. Both are extremely important. Strict adherence to the prescribed medical regime is necessary in order to give the liver, which performs vital functions in digestion, elimination, and so forth, every chance to recover and thus prevent a relapse. Convalescence may be rapid or take weeks or even months.

ONE ATTACK of infectious hepatitis usually gives immunity against further attacks by the same virus strain. Medical research suggests, however, that there may be more than one virus strain that can cause the disease. Moreover, it is thought that immunity following a mild illness is less than that which follows a serious attack of the disease.

No vaccine is presently available for immunization against hepatitis. Good sanitation and personal hygiene, particularly the thorough washing of the hands after going to the toilet, can do much to prevent its spread. Infectious hepatitis is more apt to reach epidemic proportions in areas where sanitation practices are poor or where living conditions are crowded.

IN CASES of known exposure to the disease, particularly during pregnancy and in the presence of some chronic debilitating illness, gamma globulin may be administered if the attending physician deems it advisable. If given before or soon after exposure to the infective agent, gamma globulin builds up a resistance against the disease that lasts for several months; if its administration is delayed, it may still lessen the severity of an attack should one occur.

In all cases where exposure to infectious hepatitis is suspected, a physician should be consulted without delay.

A pamphlet giving additional information on infectious hepatitis will be mailed to anyone who sends a card of request to the Division of Health Education, Los Angeles County Health Department, 241 N. Figueroa St., Los Angeles 12.



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## SCOUT TRAILS

### Girl Scout Troop 84

Girl Scout Troop 84 held a swimming party last week at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Art Callen. The troop held the party as a farewell for Candace Siler, a member of the troop who is moving to North Dakota.

Supervising the group were Mrs. Guy Warner, troop leader; and Mrs. Robert Petrini, co-leader. Life-guarding was done by Mr. Callen.

Girls participating in the afternoon of fun were Judy Bastedo, Margie Briley, Candy Callen, Cynthia Hatfield, Kathy Kreman, and Laura Munos.

Also present were Carley and Sherrie Myer, Barbara Petrini, Vicki Warner, Susan Wilkins, Diana Williamson, and Candace Siler.

Candace Siler was presented with a pin as a memento from the troop.

### Girl Scout Troop 2080

Members of Girl Scout Troop 2080 recently held a formal fashion-tea to honor their mothers. Setting for the pink and silver tea was the Torrance City Hall lounge.

White gladioli and pink carnations formed the centerpiece on the mail table, while baskets of pink and white carnations adorned the smaller tables. Tea sandwiches and cookies were served. Janice Thompson was hostess for the show, and Darlene Eaton poured.

For the fashion show the girls modeled clothing worn by the junior high scout. The show climaxed work for the Good Grooming badges, which were awarded to the girls at the end of the fashion showing.

### Hospital Sets Polio Clinic

A polio clinic is slated at the South Bay Hospital, 514 N. Prospect Ave., Redondo Beach, from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday. Inoculations will cost \$1 each. Persons continuing or beginning a polio inoculation series, or persons needing booster shots will be able to get them during the two-hour period.