CHRONIC HEPATITIS C

Why Baby Boomers Should Get Tested

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Why should baby boomers get tested for Hepatitis C?

More than 75% of adults with Hepatitis C are baby boomers. Baby boomers are people born from **1945 through 1965**. Most of them don't know they are infected.

- Baby boomers are five times more likely to be infected with Hepatitis C.
- Liver disease, liver cancer, and deaths from Hepatitis C are on the rise.
- As baby boomers age, there is a greater chance that they will develop serious, life-threatening liver disease from Hepatitis C.
- Testing people in this generation will help them learn if they are infected and get them into lifesaving care and treatment.
- Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

Why do baby boomers have such high rates of Hepatitis C?

The reason that baby boomers have the highest rates of Hepatitis C is not completely understood. Most boomers are believed to have become infected in the 1970s and 1980s when rates of Hepatitis C were the highest. Since chronic Hepatitis C can go unnoticed for up to several decades, baby boomers could be living with an infection that occurred many years ago.

Hepatitis C is primarily spread through contact with blood from an infected person. Many baby boomers could have gotten infected from contaminated blood and blood products before widespread screening of the blood supply began in 1992 and universal precautions were adopted. Others may have become infected from injecting drugs, even if only once in the past. Still, many baby boomers do not know how or when they were infected.

What should baby boomers know about Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus. The disease can cause serious health problems including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer and even death. In fact, Hepatitis C is a leading cause of liver cancer and the leading cause of liver transplants.

People with Hepatitis C:

- Often have no symptoms
- Can live with an infection for decades without feeling sick
- Can be successfully treated with medications

CDC now recommends that anyone born from 1945 through 1965 get tested for Hepatitis C.

Is there a test for Hepatitis C?

Yes. There is a simple blood test to determine if a person has ever been infected with the Hepatitis C virus.

For more information

Talk to your health professional, call your health department, or visit www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis

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