Circle of Life

Viral hepatitis is a real concern for people living with HIV.

March 29, 2021 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I've been living with HIV since 1992. I tested positive for the retrovirus when I was 22. Thankfully, since then, my overall health, apart from HIV, has been mostly stable.

As part of my regular blood work to manage my HIV, I also get tested for viral hepatitis. I remain grateful each time I find out that I am free of the hepatitis B and C viruses.

Viral hepatitis is a real concern for people living with HIV. In the United States, about 25% of folks with HIV have hep C, and about 10% of folks with HIV have hep B.

Lepena Reid is a great example. She tested HIV positive in 1988. As a result, she became an HIV advocate. In 2003, she went to the hospital for a biopsy and was diagnosed with hep C.

Reid was put on older hep C treatment, which was eventually too much for her to handle. In 2015, she began hep C treatment with the newer medications. She is now free of hep C.

Despite the fact that she is no longer living with hep C, Reid remains engaged in the fight against both HIV and viral hepatitis. Click here to read more about her journey.

Advocacy to end viral hepatitis in the United States recently took a step forward. The Department of Health and Human Services has offered a road map for the next five years.

The plan lists five main goals: preventing new infections, improving outcomes, reducing inequities, improving surveillance and data use, and coordinating efforts. Click here for more.

Although the major benefit of hep C treatment is a cure, there are additional advantages. A recent study shows lower cardiovascular risk for those cured of hep C. Click here for more.

For more related news, click here to learn about the prevalence of fatty liver disease, and click here to read about liver transplant waiting list disparities.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.