I have horrible back pain. Desperation drove me to opioids and sharing needles. Am I at risk for hep C?

September 11, 2018 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Yes. Sharing needles and drug-related equipment is the most common way that hepatitis C is transmitted. However, roughly 15 to 25 percent of people who are initially infected will clear the virus on their own, and not develop the chronic form of hep C.

Diagnosing hepatitis C begins with an antibody test. Antibodies can be detected in the blood, usually within two or three months after exposure. Six months after an HCV exposure, a blood test can detect whether you developed the chronic form of the disease.

Consider getting help if you are still dealing with chronic pain. September is Pain Awareness Month, and a time when more information is released about the latest in pain management. If you still rely on sharing needles for pain relief, the Harm Reduction Coalition provides information about safer drug use.

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