Know More Hepatitis

CDC launches a national hep C testing campaign

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Millions of people in the United States are living with hepatitis C virus (HCV), the most common blood-borne virus in the country. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that between 2.7 million and 3.9 million Americans have HCV, and most of them do not know they have the virus.

Up to 25 percent of people naturally clear the virus within the first six months, or the acute phase, and no longer have HCV. However, most people are left with chronic HCV infection. If untreated, hep C may cause fibrosis (mild to moderate liver scarring), cirrhosis (serious liver scarring), liver cancer, liver failure or death. HCV is the main reason for liver cancer transplants nationwide.

The Division of Viral Hepatitis at the CDC has launched the “Know More Hepatitis” national media campaign in order to increase awareness about hep C. The goal of the campaign is to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with the virus by increasing HCV testing among baby boomers, in particular people born from 1945 to 1965. For more information about the campaign, go to cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis.

In general, HCV testing is also recommended for people who have injected drugs, even once; those who received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992; children whose mothers were living with hep C during pregnancy; anyone who lives with HIV; people with evidence of liver disease, such as an abnormal liver test result; those on long-term kidney dialysis; and those exposed to HCV through their occupation.

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