5 Things to Know about Hepatitis C by Dr. Andrew Muir M.D.

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There are 5 important things to know about hepatitis C. Dr. Andrew Muir. M.D., a hepatologist and head of Gastroenterology at Duke University in North Carolina shares hope about hepatitis C.

If you have hepatitis C, no matter what stage, you need to hear Dr. Muir's important message. Listen too if you still need to be tested for hep C,

With brand new treatments for hep C there is more hope to cure this disease than ever before. Shorter treatment time, less side effects and a higher cure rates make fighting hep C a winnable battle.

The most important proactive step against hep C is getting tested. Hep C is known as the silent killer. Approximately 80 percent of people infected with the hepatitis C virus do not know they have the disease because symptoms are not always present, or if they have symptoms patients can mistake these for general illness.

Those who do have symptoms may exhibit fever, fatigue, decreased appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, and joint pain. If left untreated, hepatitis C can lead to liver damage, cirrhosis and even cancer. The good news is with early detection and treatment, hepatitis C can be completely cured.

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 150 million people worldwide and approximately 3 to 4 million in the United States are chronically infected with hepatitis C, a virus transmitted through blood.

There are certain risk factors each person needs to consider but remember, there are a certain percentage of people who do not have these risk factors and still have hep C. Better be safe and get tested no matter what.

Those at higher risk include:

- Those born between 1945 and 1965 (baby boomers)
- Received donated blood or organs before 1992
- Have ever injected drugs, even once many years ago
- Have certain medical conditions, such as chronic liver disease and HIV or AIDS

- Have had a tattoo or body piercing from an unsterile source

Don’t ignore or put off getting tested, your life depends on it. The test for hep C is not part of routine blood work.Take the proactive step and ask your doctor for the test for hep C.

Listen as Dr. Muir shares 5 important things to know about hepatitis C.

Do you have a question about hep C? Have you been recently diagnosed with hep C? Your comments are important to us.

References:
World Health Organization on Hepatitis C
Center for Disease Control
American Liver Foundation

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http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/blog/5-things-to-know-about-hepatitis-c