The Danger of Assuming With Hepatitis C

A dangerous step anyone can take against their health is assume they don't have hepatitis C. False assumptions can lead people to believe they don't need to be tested or get treatment for hepatitis C.

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False Assumption: Don't have risk factors

People falsely assume if they don't have risk factors then they don't need to be tested for hepatitis C. People may assume hepatitis C or liver disease only happens to those who have done drugs, drink excessively or hep C is only transmitted sexually.

In truth, there are many ways to contract hepatitis. Many people have hepatitis C even though they do not have any risk factors.

False Assumption: My doctor has probably tested me in with my annual checkup.

Wrong. Hepatitis C testing is not a standard test with annual physicals. You must ask to be tested by your doctor unless your physician has had reason to test you prior. Even if you don't have risk factors, it's still safe to be tested and know for sure. A blood test specifically for hepatitis C is the only way to be certain you do not have it.

False Assumption: Don't have symptoms

People may assume because they don't have symptoms, they don't have hepatitis C. Wrong. Hepatitis C is known as the silent disease because often symptoms do not appear until liver damage is present.

False Assumption: Can still drink alcohol with hepatitis C without harming their liver

People assume beer or wine is not like "hard liquor" so it should be safe to drink if you have hepatitis C. Wrong. Alcohol is alcohol. The American Liver Foundation, as well as liver specialists, warns people who have hepatitis C or any liver disease, not to drink alcohol in any form or any amount. Alcohol is harmful to your liver and accelerates liver damage.

False Assumption: Don't need to do anything or it will go away on its own

People may assume if they've been diagnosed with hepatitis C, they don't need to do anything about it. This is highly dangerous. Only a small percentage, 25% of people in the acute phase clear

the virus without treatment, 75% have chronic active hepatitis C which leads to liver damage without treatment causing cirrhosis, high risk of liver cancer and liver failure. You may try to forget about hepatitis C, but hepatitis C won't forget about you.

False Assumption: There's time to do something about it or have been told: "You're not sick enough to be treated by a doctor/or insurance."

While many have been denied treatment by their doctor or insurance company because they did not have significant liver damage. New hepatitis C treatments are available which are highly effective and greatly reduced in price compared to many treatments.

In the U.S. there are new generic treatments approved by the FDA that insurance companies and Medicare are now approving for those without restrictions for liver damage.

False Assumption: Don't have medical insurance so I can't get treated

There are a wide variety of patient assistance programs and pharmaceutical companies which offer help with treatment for those without medical insurance. Veterans also are being treated through the Veterans Administration regardless of restriction on liver damage.

False Assumption: I've probably had a vaccine for hepatitis C.

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. There is only a vaccine for hepatitis A and B. Due to the way the hep C virus mutates and replicates in the body, it is very difficult to develop a vaccine.

False Assumption: Once I've had hepatitis C, I'm immune and can't get it again.

Just because you've had hepatitis C in the past or been exposed does not mean you can't get it again. You are not immune. The only way to prevent infection is to be mindful of all risk factors.

Don't assume you don't have hepatitis C or there is nothing you can do about it. Take action. Get tested, seek treatment and get cured.

Have you had a false assumption about Hepatitis C? Where are you in your journey with Hep C?

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