Hepatitis C: Testing, Risk Factors, Symptoms

August 21, 2019 By Connie M. Welch

The Importance of Getting Tested

Don’t assume your doctor or hospital is testing you for Hep C. The Hepatitis C test is NOT part of a routine physical exam or routine blood work, you must ask to be tested. A doctor would need to order this test specifically.

Since 1992, blood donation centers in the U.S. are required to screen all blood prior to use, you may have been notified if you have given blood or possibly through an insurance company blood work if they were screening for Hep C.

Most people do not know they are infected. It is known as the “silent killer” due to symptoms not appearing for some time and often mask other conditions. Meanwhile liver damage is being done which can lead to severe scarring (cirrhosis), liver cancer or liver failure. The goal is to eliminate the virus with treatment before more liver damage is done.

The test for Hepatitis C is simple blood test. The first test for Hep C is an antibody test to find out if the patient is positive for the antibodies. Antibodies can be detected in the blood usually within two to three months after the virus enters the body.

Be safe, get tested. Practice good health habits, and get treatment. Don’t put off getting tested or getting treatment, even if you have done treatment for Hep C in the past and didn’t receive a cure, improved treatments with higher cure rates with less side effects are now available.

Don’t forget about your Hep C. Hep C doesn’t forget about you and is actively doing damage while you wait. Don’t compromise your life and future. Don’t wait; be proactive with testing and treatment so you can get cured.

Get tested regardless, many people never know where they got the virus. What’s more important is you get tested and treated so you can get cured!

Talk to your Doctor and Know your Risk Factors:

The American Liver Foundation states these are the highest risk factors for HCV:

*Anyone born between 1945 and 1965

*If you have ever had a blood transfusion or organ transplant prior to July 1992

*Received a clotting factor made before 1987

*Have ever had hemodialysis

*HCV contaminated needle stick or blood in a hospital or healthcare environment

*Shared needles or other equipment to inject drugs or inhaled drugs (even once)

*Have ever worked or been housed in prison

*Have HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)

*Hepatitis C is usually spread when blood from a person with HCV enters the body of someone who is not infected

*Anyone with unexplained liver problems or inflammation, including abnormal liver tests

*Borrowed razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers with someone who has Hep C

*Born to an HCV infected mother

*Tattoos or body piercing with reused and unsterile tools

*Multiple sex partners or sex with partners who have other sexually transmitted disease, or rough sex

*Some people may never know where they contracted HCV.

How you got Hep C is not as important as getting tested, diagnosed and move on toward treatment and a cure.

Vaccines

There are vaccines for Hepatitis A and B which are a series of shots, but there is NO vaccine for Hepatitis C. The Hep C virus mutates and replicates in the body making it difficult to come up with a vaccine.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis C?

Symptoms of Hepatitis C can mask other conditions. Symptoms of Hepatitis C can occur as early as 6 to 12 weeks of contact with the virus or may not appear for many years.

The most common symptoms are:

*mild flu like fatigue

*poor appetite

*nausea

*fever

*chills

*headaches

*abdominal pain

*dark urine

*itchy skin

*muscle and joint pain

*Some but not all Hepatitis patients turn jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes).

Fatigue and overall not feeling well are the most common symptoms and can very easy be dismissed for being overworked, not getting enough rest, stress, etc... But many patients have no symptoms.

Hep C is treatable and beatable. With practicing good healthy habits and treatment for Hep C, you can help your liver function better. Cure rates with medical treatment are now 90% to 99%. Common treatment length for Hep C is 8 to 12 weeks.

Have you been tested for Hep C? Have you ever done Hep C Treatment? Are you waiting for Hep C Treatment?

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http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/blog/hepatitis-c-testing-risk-factors-symptoms