



# Mother's Day: Raising Hepatitis Awareness

May 13, 2018 By [Lucinda K. Porter RN](#)

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Imagine that you just gave birth to your first baby and it is your first Mother's Day. However, instead of celebrating, you are worried. When you were pregnant, a blood test confirmed that you have chronic hepatitis C virus infection. There is a small chance that you may have passed hep C to your child, but you don't know yet whether you did or not.

This is the reality for many women. Living with hepatitis C is difficult enough. Transmitting hep C to another human is harder to bear, and if that human is a baby, that pain is magnified. Add to this, the waiting to find out if your precious baby just has the hepatitis C-antibody or will be a child who has the virus.

Hepatitis C is the most common bloodborne virus in the U.S. It may be transmitted if a person's blood is exposed to blood that carries the virus. This includes from mother to baby, known as vertical transmission. The risk is small, especially compared to more common ways hep C is transmitted. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates vertical transmission risk at about 4%.

Mother-to-infant transmission is the leading cause of childhood hepatitis C infection with vertical transmission rates ranging from 3 percent to 10 percent. A recent study published in the University of Pittsburgh's [Pediatrics](#) journal reported that seven out of ten babies born to women with hepatitis C are not screened. Between 2006 and 2014, the prevalence in [women with hepatitis C](#) increased by 60 percent.

Women with hepatitis C face multiple issues that tend to be gender-related. To learn more about these issues, visit [Women and Hepatitis C](#) and [Family Planning and Hepatitis C](#).

For information about pregnancy and hepatitis B, [click here](#).

We need to eliminate viral hepatitis in everyone, for everyone. Share the hope this Hepatitis Awareness Month that we can #StopHep [@hepatitismag](#).

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