Baby Boomers - To Test or Not to Test - That is the Question!

December 10, 2012 By Margaret Dudley

Hello all! I felt the need to take a minute from my ongoing battle with Gilead Sciences to put my own two cents in about the recent controversy regarding HCV testing in the "baby boomer" population.

This past August, the CDC came out with strong recommendations that doctors test all "baby boomer" patients regardless of past known risk factors. Now the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force seems to be recommending only that doctors "consider" HCV testing for their patients who are "baby boomers" and have no other known risks. It never fails to amaze me how you can get such completely different answers from well informed, educated groups whose only consideration is supposedly the public's best health and well-being.

Given that screening for hepatitis C involves a simple, inexpensive blood test and unlike other types of hepatitis, there is no vaccine available for hepatitis C, I would like to offer my own recommendations as a person who actually has hepatitis C. And they are as follows:

If you are a "baby boomer" (born between 1945 and 1965) then by all means you should ask your doctor for a one-time test for HCV regardless of your past risk factors, or lack of.

And I will take my recommendations even further. If you have ever had a needle pierce your body (even just once) whether it be by your own hand, or at the hand of a doctor, nurse, medical technician, a dentist, an acupuncturist, get tested! If you have a tattoo, body piercings, permanent cosmetic tattooing, or received air-gun inoculations while serving in the military, get tested! If you have had a blood transfusion, an organ transplant, or dialysis get tested!

Why do I recommend this?

Because even if there is only the slightest risk that you might have this disease, just by knowing you have it, you may be able to slow the progression of this disease by making certain lifestyle changes and by avoiding some foods, some medicines, all alcoholic beverages, certain supplements and vitamins, and even some herbal teas. If you don't know you have hepatitis C, you might continue making choices that could hasten this disease and end up with cirrhosis and/or liver cancer!

I wish I had known sooner than later!

So the bottom line... KNOWLEDGE IS POWER! So GET TESTED... but before you run out and do that, take a minute to sign this petition and help get the cure!

Or for more information visit: www.HepC-Cured.org

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