

What should Baby Boomers (people born from 1945 to 1965) know about hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is the most common chronic blood-borne infectious disease outbreak in our lifetime. Most people who are exposed to the hepatitis C virus (HCV) develop a lifelong, or chronic infection. Over time, chronic hepatitis C can cause serious health problems including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer and even death. Hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver cancer and liver transplants in the United States. Most are unaware of how or when they were infected, or that they are currently infected; people with HCV can live for decades without obvious symptoms.

Why do Baby Boomers have such high rates of hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is spread through blood to blood contact. This means that blood from an infected person must enter the bloodstream of an uninfected person. A reliable test for HCV did not exist until 1992. Prior to this, the blood and tissue supply were not properly screened for HCV, and universal precautions for the prevention of blood and fluid-borne infections were not fully adopted, resulting in many opportunities for unknown HCV exposure. Baby Boomers may have been exposed to HCV prior to 1992 through: blood transfusion; plasma donation; being born prematurely; tattooing practices; or drug use, even if only once, even if many years ago.

Why should Baby Boomers get tested for hepatitis C?

While anyone can get hepatitis C, more than 75% of infected adults are Baby Boomers:

- Baby Boomers are five times more likely to have hepatitis C than any other age group
- The longer people live with HCV, the more likely they are to develop serious, life-threatening liver disease
- Getting tested is the only way to identify infection and can be the start to life-saving care and treatment
- Treatments are available that can cure HCV, and if caught early, can prevent further liver damage, cirrhosis, and liver cancer caused by the virus

Have you been tested?

Many people unknowingly live with HCV for decades without feeling sick. Hepatitis C can successfully be cured with medications.

The CDC recommends that people born between 1945-1965 get tested at least once in their lifetime. Get tested today.

**Even if you feel healthy,
you could still have**

Hepatitis C

**Left untreated, it can
lead to liver cancer.
Talk to your Doctor.**

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Baby Boomers & HEPATITIS



**DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE.
IT AFFECTS MILLIONS
AND CAUSES LIVER CANCER.**

Talk to your doctor about testing. Early detection saves lives.



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Liver Health

Your liver is a pretty cool organ and is often called the 'non-complaining' organ. Your liver is located on the right side of your body and acts as your body's filter. Therefore, everything you eat, drink, smell, and absorb through your skin gets processed through the liver, which means it may be frequently exposed to alcohol and various toxins. Since the liver does not complain, we often do not know when something is wrong.

Liver disease is on the rise, and liver cancer is now the second leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide.

There are a few culprits that put the liver at risk, one being Fatty Liver Disease, also called Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis (NASH). NASH develops when there is an excess buildup of fat in the liver. Also, you don't even have to be overweight to have a fatty liver! Cirrhosis is caused by inflammation in the liver which causes scar

YOUR LIVER IS...

- On your right side under your ribcage
- Your largest organ without nerves
- Your body's filter system - all that you eat, drink, smell or absorb goes through your liver

tissue buildup in the liver and increases the chance of developing liver cancer. Viruses can cause liver damage, too. Among them are hepatitis A and B which are both preventable through vaccination. Hepatitis C is the most common chronic blood-borne virus in the US. Hepatitis C was unable to be tested for until 1992, and therefore it lived in blood and tissue banks for decades before it was identified. Hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver disease, and most people don't know they have it. Talk with your healthcare provider about a series of liver function tests including a hepatitis C antibody test, and hepatitis A and B vaccinations to protect your liver.



WHAT CAN HURT YOUR LIVER?

- A diet high in fat
- Viruses like hepatitis A, B and C
- Toxins like lead-based paint, pesticides, solvents, etc.
- Alcohol, some medications (even over the counter), and some street drugs

Always ask your healthcare provider before taking a new product to make sure it is not toxic to the liver.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR LIVER HEALTHY

- Reduce or eliminate your alcohol intake
- Get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B
- Ask your healthcare professional to test you for hepatitis C antibodies
- Eat a well-balanced and lower fat diet
- Practice good sleeping habits
- Stay active and exercise regularly
- Manage your stress
- Learn and practice harm reduction – never share personal items
- Try to avoid environmental toxins
- Drink plenty of water; eight to ten 8-ounce glasses a day.

Natural Progression of Hepatitis C

