

UNDERSTANDING HEPATITIS C

► **Hepatitis C** is a disease that affects your liver. It is caused by the Hepatitis C Virus or HCV for short. It is spread by contact with infected blood. Nearly 1 in every 50 people in the U.S. has been infected with the Hepatitis C Virus.

Very few people who get HCV can get rid of the virus on their own. Most develop a chronic (lifelong) infection. The symptoms of HCV infection are often absent or very mild but over time, the virus can seriously damage your liver, causing liver disease, liver cancer, and sometimes death.

Call Hep-C ALERT to learn about local resources for prevention and testing.

Hep-C ALERT, Inc.
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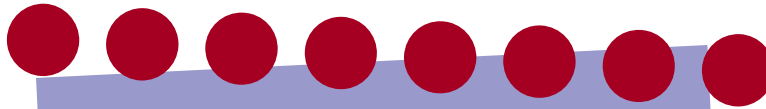
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HOW IS HEPATITIS C SPREAD?

Hepatitis C Virus is spread when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected.

WHO'S AT RISK?

Anyone can acquire Hepatitis C, however the risk of infection is higher with certain activities. You should get tested if

- You ever injected illicit drugs, even if it was just one time, many years ago
- You had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992
- You were a healthcare worker and had contact with blood on the job
- You were on long-term kidney dialysis or were treated with clotting factor
- Your mother had hepatitis C when she gave birth to you
- You have/had abnormal liver function blood tests

Lesser risks include sharing needles for tattooing and body piercing, sharing straws to “snort” drugs and having a history of multiple sex partners and/or sexually transmitted infection.

HOW IS IT PREVENTED?

There is no vaccine for HCV. To protect yourself

- Don't share needles or “works” to inject drugs
- Don't share personal care items like razors, toothbrushes and nail clippers
- Don't share needles for tattoo/piercing
- If you sexually active with more than one long-term steady partner, use condoms correctly and every time you have sex

**ARE YOU AT RISK?
GET TESTED. GET TREATED!**