

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



JULY 2018

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HEPATITIS C AWARENESS



According to the CDC, the rate of Hepatitis C infection is on the rise nationwide. Kentucky leads the nation with the highest incidence of Hepatitis C — our rate is seven times the national rate. Kentucky had the highest rate of new Hepatitis C infections in the nation from 2008 through 2015. Without a diagnosis or healthcare treatment plan, people with Hepatitis C will suffer and lives will be lost.

Worldwide, 300 million people living with viral hepatitis are unaware. Most people with Hepatitis C do not know they are infected. The longer people live with Hepatitis C, the more likely they are to develop a life-threatening liver disease.

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There are treatments and medications for Hepatitis C that your primary care physician can prescribe.



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What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that inflames and damages the liver. It progresses slowly, and the infected person might not notice symptoms. The infection can go undetected for years.

Causes

Hepatitis C is transferred through contact with the blood of an infected person. Typically this contact occurs through:

- sharing needles while using drugs (use of injected drugs accounts for about 60 percent of new Hepatitis C cases each year)
- using tattoo needles or piercings, when the instruments have not been sterilized
- using an infected person's toothbrush, razor or nail clippers

Signs and symptoms

Many people with Hepatitis C do not experience symptoms and are unaware they are infected. When symptoms do show up, they can include:

- Fever
- Fatigue

- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Gray-colored stool
- Joint pain
- Jaundice

Diagnosis and treatment

Screenings are important because someone infected with Hepatitis C may not show symptoms. Ask your physician to test for the disease through blood testing or a physical examination for signs of liver damage. If your results come back positive, there are different treatments and medications that your primary care physician can prescribe.

RESOURCES:

- <http://www.worldhepatitisday.org>
- <https://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/wellness-community/news-events/health-information/hepatitis-c>
- <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/health-wellness/hepatitis-c>

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