

ARE YOU AT RISK FOR



HEPATITIS C

DIRECT BLOOD-TO-BLOOD CONTACT Hepatitis C is spread by direct blood-to-blood contact. This means that in order to get hepatitis C you have to get someone else's HCV-infected blood into your bloodstream. Anything that places another person's blood in direct contact with your blood puts you at risk for hepatitis C and other blood-borne diseases.

RISK FACTORS



SHARING DRUG USING EQUIPMENT

BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS / PRODUCTS

OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE

SHARING PERSONAL ITEMS

CHILDREN BORN TO HEPATITIS C POSITIVE WOMEN

SEXUAL TRANSMISSION

GETTING TATTOOS AND PIERCINGS

PERSONAL CARE SALONS

MILITARY SERVICE

INCARCERATION

ACUPUNCTURE

If you want more details about these risk factors, or need more information about hepatitis C, visit us at:

WWW.HCVADVOCATE.ORG



ARE YOU AT RISK FOR



HEPATITIS C

If you want more details about these risk factors, or need more information about hepatitis C, visit us at:

WWW.HCVADVOCATE.ORG



RISK FACTORS



SHARING DRUG USING EQUIPMENT Sharing equipment for injection and non-injection drugs, such as needles, cottons, cookers, ties, straws, pipes and even water are some of the easiest ways to get hepatitis C. Even the smallest amount of blood that you may not be able to see can transmit the virus. If you have ever injected street drugs or shared a needle or works with another person – even just once – you should be tested for hepatitis C.



BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS / PRODUCTS Before 1992, many people contracted hepatitis C through blood or blood product transfusions. If you had a medical procedure before 1992 where blood or blood products were used you could have been at risk and should be tested. Now the blood supply is screened for hepatitis C.

YOU SHOULD BE TESTED FOR HEPATITIS C IF YOU HAVE HAD:

- Medical and dental procedures performed in some foreign countries
- Blood clotting factors before 1987
- Hemodialysis



OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE Health-care workers who come in contact with blood are at risk for getting hepatitis C and should be tested. The most common cases of transmission occur in needle-sticks with large hollow-bore needles. If you were exposed to any hepatitis C-infected blood you should be tested.



SHARING PERSONAL ITEMS If you come in contact with hepatitis C-infected personal hygiene items such as razors and toothbrushes there is a risk that you could have been exposed to the hepatitis C virus. Although this transmission route is rare, ask your doctor or nurse if you should be tested for hepatitis C.

CHILDREN BORN TO HEPATITIS C POSITIVE WOMEN If your mother is HCV positive you should be tested.



SEXUAL TRANSMISSION Sexual transmission of hepatitis C is uncommon. People who are in a stable, long term monogamous relationship are at a low risk of getting hepatitis C from their sexual partner. However, in some so-called high risk groups, including people who have unprotected sex with multiple partners or have sex with someone with a sexually transmitted disease, the risk of getting hepatitis C is higher. Most government agencies do not recommend routine testing for someone who falls into a high risk sexual category or for someone having unprotected sex with an HCV-infected steady partner. However, if you are worried about sexual transmission and would like to get tested, talk with your medical provider.



GETTING TATTOOS AND PIERCINGS If you ever received a tattoo or piercing in an unsafe setting you should be tested for hepatitis C. Most commercial tattoo parlors follow standard safety precautions and make sure that only new needles and a separate ink pot are used for each consumer. In other settings, such as in a prison or on the street, the chance of getting hepatitis C is higher. If you think that you were put at risk, get tested.

PERSONAL CARE SALONS If you have your calluses shaved, cuticles cut or any other procedure done where skin is broken you should be tested for hepatitis C. In many states these types of procedures are now illegal.



MILITARY SERVICE There is a high prevalence of HCV in Veterans, especially in those who served in combat during the Vietnam War. If you believe that you were put at risk for getting hepatitis C contact the Veterans Administration or your regular doctor or nurse about being tested for hepatitis C.

INCARCERATION People who have been incarcerated have higher prevalence rates of hepatitis C. If you have ever served time in prison or been confined to a mental institution you should talk to your doctor or nurse about being tested for hepatitis C.



ACUPUNCTURE If you get acupuncture, the same safety precautions apply as with any procedure where there is a possibility of blood exposure. Only new acupuncture needles should be used for each client, and your acupuncture provider should take safety precautions against spreading hepatitis C.