

# Hepatitis C and Baby Boomers

## *Why are we concerned about Hepatitis C in baby boomers?*

Hepatitis C, a contagious disease caused by a virus, can lead to a chronic, life-long infection and serious liver problems. One in 30 adults born between 1945 and 1965 (baby boomers) is infected with the virus and most do not know it.



## *What causes Hepatitis C?*

Hepatitis C virus is spread through contact with blood from an infected person. Examples include:

- Sharing needles when injecting drugs
- Needlestick injuries in healthcare settings
- Babies born to mothers with Hepatitis C
- Blood transfusions and organ transplants before 1992—improved blood screening tests reduce this risk now
- Poor infection-control practices during tattooing or piercing

## *How do you know if you have Hepatitis C?*

About 70-80% of people do not have symptoms when they first get infected, but some develop fever, stomach problems, yellow skin or other symptoms. In many cases, there are no symptoms until liver problems have developed many years later. Because of this, screening tests are important.

## *Who should be tested for Hepatitis C?*

The CDC recommends that anyone born from 1945 through 1965 or anyone with the risk factors listed above get tested. If Hepatitis C is discovered early, it can be treated. Unlike some other types of hepatitis, there is no vaccine available to protect against Hepatitis C.

*For more information go to:* [www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis)



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