HEPATITIS C INFORMATIONAL TOOL-KIT

NATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN ACTION DAY JULY 25TH

HEPATITIS C

NATIONAL BLACK LEADERSHIP COMMISSION ON AIDS, INC
To assist in promoting National African American Hepatitis C Action Day (NAAHCAD), NBLCA have developed this Hepatitis C Toolkit to provide step-by-step processes on how to plan NAAHCAD activities and raise awareness surrounding the Hepatitis C Virus.

This Hepatitis C Toolkit contains documents to assist organizations and community leaders specific needs and will help maximize the impact of NAAHCAD in their community. We encourage organizations and community leaders to review the contents carefully and consider modifying them for your target community and charge full speed ahead! For any questions regarding any components or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Overall, this toolkit is vital to organizations and community leaders new to NAAHCAD and those looking for of a fresh approach. Stay tuned and visit NBLCA’s website often as planning tools continue to develop.

National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.
www.nblca.org
# NBLCA HEPATITIS C INFORMATIONAL TOOL-KIT

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Hepatitis C Testing/Screening Summary Form

Date: ______________________ Start Time: ___________ End Time: ___________

Event: ____________________________________________________________

Number of Counselor(s): ____________________________________________

Name of Testing Agency: ____________________________________________

Location:

Name of Location: __________________________________________________

Address of Location: _______________________________________________

City, State, Zip of Location: __________________________________________

Type of Location:  
☐ CBO 
☐ Mobile Unit 
☐ Health care facility
☐ Public Housing 
☐ HIV Testing Site 
☐ Hospital
☐ Faith Setting 
☐ Govt/Business/Industry 
☐ Community Health Center
☐ School/Educational 
☐ other ______________

Demographics:

Total Tested: _____________ (this number must equal the sum of the gender, age and race)

# Of persons newly tested using an anti-HCV test _______

Gender:                           Age Groups:                           Race/Ethnicity:

______ Male                         _____ Under 13                         _____ Black
______ Female                       _____ 13-19                           _____ Latino/a
______ Transgender                  _____ 20-29                           _____ White
______ Other                        _____ 30-49                           _____ Asian

_____ 50 +                           _____ PI – Pacific Islander

Zip Codes Covered (for this event): __________________________________________

Focus: _____ Heterosexual       _____ MSM        _____ LGBT

Targeted Population: Pick One)  
☐ Adolescents  
☐ Women  
☐ Immigrants  
☐ African American

Insurance: Private _________      Medicaid _________      Medicare _________

Total counseled and not tested: ________          Total positives:___________

Total who received results: ________           Total referred to care:______________
NOTE: To download this file please visit www.nblca.org
Hepatitis C is a Silent Epidemic

Co-Founders:
National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.
Coalition On Positive Health Empowerment
Harm Reduction Coalition

#AAHepCActionDay

NOTE: To download this file please visit www.nblca.org
“When I was young, I hit the streets and they hit me back a lot harder.”

HEPATITIS C CAN LEAD TO LIVER CANCER

Hard-hitting as it may seem, you could be living with Hepatitis C for 20 or 30 years and never have symptoms. Talk to your doctor about getting tested. It could save your life.
Yes. Hepatitis C is this serious.

HEPATITIS C CAN LEAD TO LIVER CANCER

Most people with Hepatitis C don’t know they have it. If you’re serious about your health, talk to your doctor about getting tested. It could save your life.
WHEREAS: JULY 25, 2014 IS HEREBY DESIGNATED AFRICAN AMERICAN HEPATITIS C ACTION DAY IN THE STATE OF Name of State.

WHEREAS: NEARLY # affected in city or state ARE CHRONICALLY INFECTED WITH THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS (HCV) AND MOST REMAIN UNDIAGNOSED, GREATLY INCREASING THEIR RISK FOR ADVANCED LIVER DISEASE, LIVER CANCER AND DEATH.

WHEREAS: AFRICAN AMERICANS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO HAVE EVER BEEN INFECTED WITH THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS AND THEIR MORTALITY RELATED TO THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS IS ALMOST DOUBLE THE RATES FOR NON-HISPANIC WHITE AMERICANS.

WHEREAS: MORE THAN 75% OF THE 3.2 MILION ADULTS LIVING WITH HEPATITIS C IN THE UNITED STATES ARE BABY BOOMERS – BORN 1945-1965 AND THE Name of State LEGISLATURE RECENTLY PASSED LEGISLATION, CURRENTLY PENDING MY APPROVAL, THAT REQUIRES ALL MEDICAL PROVIDERS TO OFFER HEPATITIS C TESTING TO ALL BABY BOOMERS.

WHEREAS: THE OBSERVANCE OF “AFRICAN AMERICAN HEPATITIS C ACTION DAY” IS A NATIONWIDE EFFORT TO MOBILIZE BLACK AMERICAN COMMUNITIES TO GET EDUCATED, GET TESTED, AND GET TREATED TO STEM THE TIDE OF THIS SILENT EPIDEMIC PLAGUING BLACK COMMUNITIES; AND

WHEREAS: Name of your Agency IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL BLACK LEADERSHIP COMMISSION ON AIDS, INC., COALITION ON POSITIVE HEALTH EMPOWERMENT, HARM REDUCTION, COALITION, OTHER COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS, ARE HOSTING COMMUNITY EVENTS TO OBSERVE THIS DAY AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO BLACK AMERICANS AND ALL CONCERNED CITIZENS; AND

WHEREAS: IT IS FITTING THAT WE JOIN WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO EXPRESS OUR STRONG SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HEPATITIS C ACTION DAY.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Name , Title OF THE STATE OF Name, IN RECOGNITION OF THIS IMPORTANT DAY, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2014 IN THE STATE OF Name AS:

“AFRICAN AMERICAN HEPATITIS C ACTION DAY”
Hepatitis C – Get Tested, Get Treated, and Get the Word Out

PSA #1

The Hepatitis C virus is a silent killer: it’s the leading cause of liver cancer. Millions of Americans have hepatitis C, but an estimated 75 percent of them don’t know it. People can live with Hepatitis C for decades without having symptoms or feeling sick. The death rate related to Hepatitis C is nearly twice as high for black people, and 22 percent of all Hepatitis C infections in the nation are among blacks. Talk to your doctor about getting a simple blood test to find out if you have the virus. Early detection can save your life. The National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS and the Coalition for Positive Health Empowerment urge you to get tested, get treated, and get the word out. Visit [website] for more information.

PSA #2

Five facts you should know about Hepatitis C. One. Hepatitis C is a leading cause of liver cancer. Two. Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus. Three. Hepatitis C testing is not part of routine blood work. Four. Millions of Americans have hepatitis C, but most don’t know it because there are often no symptoms. Five. Black people have a much higher risk of infection. Talk to your doctor. Early detection can save lives. The National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS and the Coalition for Positive Health Empowerment urge you to get tested, get treated, and get the word out. Visit [website] for more information.
Sample Press Release Updated soon on website
## Media Summary Form

[Please use a separate form for each media event]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization:</th>
<th>____________________________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of the media coverage:</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type of Media Coverage:**
- [ ] Electronic Broadcast
- [ ] Internet
- [ ] Print Media

**Specific category of media:**
- [ ] Radio
- [ ] Television
- [ ] Internet
- [ ] PSA Radio
- [ ] PSA Television
- [ ] listserv
- [ ] News Broadcast Radio
- [ ] News Broadcast Television
- [ ] Newslinks
- [ ] Interview Radio
- [ ] Interview Television
- [ ] Social Media
- [ ] Newspapers
- [ ] Magazines
- [ ] Other ____________________________________________

**Media provider:**

Name of media provider: ____________________________________________

Region(s) they cover: ____________________________________________

**Demographics:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population they reach:</th>
<th>Listenership ________</th>
<th>Proportion: Adolescent ________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readership ________</td>
<td>African American ________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viewership ________</td>
<td>Women ________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please be sure to include a copy of the coverage with your narrative report.* Also provide a link to the online coverage if available.
Social Media Avatar - Facebook | Twitter
#AAHepCActionDay Image result for twitter icon
NOTE: To download this file please visit www.nblca.org

Find Out How to Get Tested and Get Involved!

Hepatitis C is a silent epidemic

Facebook Banner
NOTE: To download this file please visit www.nblca.org
Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).

An estimate 3.2 million people in the U.S. have chronic Hepatitis C. Most are unaware of their infection.

Each year 17,000 Americans become infected with Viral Hepatitis C (HCV).

Approximately, 12,000 people die every year from HCV-related liver disease.

Anyone can get Hepatitis C, but more than 75% of adults infected are people born between 1945 and 1965.

African Americans make up about 12% of the U.S. population, and comprise of about 22% of Hepatitis C cases.

Get tested! The only way to know if someone has hepatitis C is to get tested. New rapid tests are now available and the results can be read within 20 to 30 minutes.

Hepatitis C is spread when blood from a person infected with HCV enters the body of someone who is not infected.

25% of the people living with HIV are also infected with Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C can be treated. If the liver is damaged, antiviral medication can slow damage to the liver and may even get rid of the virus. There is currently no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C can be prevented. Do not share needles or equipment to inject drugs; do not use personal items like razors, glucose monitors, and toothbrushes that have come in contact with an infected person’s blood.
HEPATITIS C

General Information

What is hepatitis?
“Hepatitis” means inflammation of the liver. The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected.

Hepatitis is most often caused by a virus. In the United States, the most common types of viral hepatitis are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. Heavy alcohol use, toxins, some medications, and certain medical conditions can also cause hepatitis.

What is Hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus. When first infected, a person can develop an “acute” infection, which can range in severity from a very mild illness with few or no symptoms to a serious condition requiring hospitalization.

Acute: Hepatitis C is a short-term illness that occurs within the first 6 months after someone is exposed to the Hepatitis C virus. For reasons that are not known, 15%–25% of people “clear” the virus without treatment. Approximately 75%–85% of people who become infected with the Hepatitis C virus develop “chronic,” or lifelong, infection.

Chronic: Hepatitis C is a long-term illness that occurs when the Hepatitis C virus remains in a person’s body. Over time, it can lead to serious liver problems, including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver failure, or liver cancer (see chart).

How is Hepatitis C spread?
Hepatitis C is usually spread when blood from a person infected with the Hepatitis C virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. Today, most people become infected with Hepatitis C by sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs. Before widespread screening of the blood supply began in 1992, Hepatitis C was also commonly spread through blood transfusions and organ transplants. Although uncommon, outbreaks of Hepatitis C have occurred from blood contamination in medical settings.

Can Hepatitis C be spread through sex?
Yes, although scientists do not know how frequently this occurs. Having a sexually transmitted disease or HIV, sex with multiple partners, or rough sex appears to increase a person’s risk for Hepatitis C. There also appears to be an increased risk for sexual transmission of Hepatitis C among gay men who are HIV-positive.

Can a person get Hepatitis C from a tattoo or piercing?
There is little evidence that Hepatitis C is spread by getting tattoos in licensed, commercial facilities. Whenever tattoos or body piercings are given in informal settings or with non-sterile instruments, transmission of Hepatitis C and other infectious diseases is possible.

Can Hepatitis C be prevented?
Yes. To reduce the risk of becoming infected with the Hepatitis C virus:

- Do not share needles or other equipment to inject cosmetic substances, drugs, or steroids
- Do not use personal items that may have come into contact with an infected person’s blood, such as razors, nail clippers, toothbrushes, or glucose monitors
- Do not get tattoos or body piercings from an unlicensed facility or in an informal setting

Is there a vaccine for Hepatitis C?
Although there is currently no vaccine to prevent Hepatitis C, research is being conducted to develop one.

What is Hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus.
How is Hepatitis C treated?
Since acute Hepatitis C rarely causes symptoms, it often goes undiagnosed and therefore untreated. When it is diagnosed, doctors recommend rest, adequate nutrition, fluids, and antiviral medications. People with chronic Hepatitis C should be monitored regularly for signs of liver disease. Even though a person may not have symptoms or feel sick, damage to the liver can still occur. Antiviral medication can be used to treat some people with chronic Hepatitis C, although not everyone needs or can benefit from treatment. For many, treatment can be successful and results in the virus no longer being detected.

What can people with Hepatitis C do to take care of their liver?
People with chronic Hepatitis C should see a doctor regularly. They also should ask their health professional before taking any prescriptions or over-the-counter medications—including herbal supplements or vitamins—as they can potentially damage the liver. People with chronic Hepatitis C should also avoid alcohol since it can accelerate liver damage.

How common is Hepatitis C?
An estimated 3.2 million people in the United States have chronic Hepatitis C. Most are unaware of their infection. Each year, about 17,000 Americans become infected with Hepatitis C.

How serious is Hepatitis C?
Chronic Hepatitis C is a serious disease that can result in long-term health problems, including liver damage, liver failure, and liver cancer. Approximately 12,000 people die every year from Hepatitis C-related liver disease.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis C?
Many people with Hepatitis C do not have symptoms and do not know they are infected. Even though a person has no symptoms, the virus can still be detected in the blood.

If symptoms occur with acute infection, they can appear anytime from 2 weeks to 6 months after exposure. Symptoms of chronic Hepatitis C can take up to 30 years to develop. Damage to the liver can silently occur during this time. When symptoms do appear, they often are a sign of advanced liver disease. Symptoms for both acute and chronic Hepatitis C can include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, grey-colored stools, joint pain, and jaundice.

How is Hepatitis C diagnosed?
Doctors can diagnose Hepatitis C using specific blood tests that are not part of blood work typically done during regular physical exams. Typically, a person first gets a screening test that looks for “antibodies” to the Hepatitis C virus. Antibodies are chemicals released into the bloodstream when a person becomes infected. The antibodies remain in the bloodstream, even if the person clears the virus. If the screening test is positive for Hepatitis C antibodies, different blood tests are needed to determine whether the infection has been cleared or has become a chronic infection.

Who should get tested for Hepatitis C?
Testing for Hepatitis C is recommended for certain groups, including people who:
- Currently inject drugs
- Injected drugs in the past, even if it was just once or occurred many years ago
- Have HIV infection
- Have abnormal liver tests or liver disease
- Received donated blood or organs before 1992
- Have been exposed to blood on the job through a needlestick or injury with a sharp object
- Are on hemodialysis

For more information
Talk to your health professional, call your health department, or visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.
HEPATITIS C

Living with Chronic Hepatitis C

How does a person know if he or she has chronic Hepatitis C?

Two different types of blood tests are needed to tell if a person has Hepatitis C. A person first gets a test that looks for “antibodies” to the Hepatitis C virus. Antibodies are released into the bloodstream when a person becomes infected. If a person has a positive test for Hepatitis C antibodies, he or she must have a confirmatory test. This test looks for the presence of the Hepatitis C virus. When the confirmatory test is positive, this means a person currently has the virus in his or her blood.

If you have been told that you have chronic Hepatitis C, it is important to discuss with your doctor:

- Your past or current risks
- The results of the two tests
- What to do next

What is chronic Hepatitis C?

Chronic Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that results from a long-term infection with the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). Chronic Hepatitis C can lead to serious health problems including liver damage, liver failure, or liver cancer. Over time, approximately 60%-70% of people with chronic Hepatitis C develop liver disease and 1%-5% of people get liver cancer or cirrhosis.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis C?

Most people with chronic Hepatitis C do not have any symptoms. Whether or not you show symptoms depends on many factors, such as how long you have had the virus and any other health conditions you have. Symptoms of chronic Hepatitis C can take up to 30 years to develop. When symptoms do appear, they can be a sign of serious liver problems. If and when you experience symptoms, they can include: fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, grey-colored bowel movements, joint pain, and jaundice.

What if I don’t feel sick?

People with Hepatitis C often do not feel sick for many years. As a result, people could be living with Hepatitis C and appear healthy while liver damage silently occurs. Whether or not you have symptoms, the virus can be spread to others.

Why do I need to go to a doctor?

Your doctor will evaluate your overall health and may do additional tests to check your liver. There are several different tests your doctor may order:

- Liver function tests, also called a liver panel, to tell how well your liver is working. One of the most common tests is called ALT. The ALT levels are often, but not always, higher in people with hepatitis
- An ultrasound exam to create a visual image of your liver
- A liver biopsy, which is removal of a tiny bit of your liver, to allow your doctor to look directly at the health of the liver
- A genotype test which determines the type of Hepatitis C virus you have
- A viral load test which determines how much virus you have in your body

How is chronic Hepatitis C treated?

Medications, called antivirals, can be used to treat many people with chronic Hepatitis C. However, not everyone needs or can benefit from treatment. It is important to be checked by a doctor experienced in treating chronic Hepatitis C. He or she can determine the most appropriate medical care. Decisions about starting antiviral treatment are based on many factors, such as the type of virus, the condition of the liver, and other health conditions. Whether or not to be treated or when to start treatment should be discussed with your doctor.
Can a person spread Hepatitis C to his or her family or people he or she is close to?

Since the Hepatitis C virus is transmitted through blood, it is important that the person not share any personal items that might have blood on them, even in tiny amounts, such as toothbrushes, razors, or nail clippers. It is important to cover all cuts and sores and thoroughly clean all surfaces after they may have come in contact with infected blood.

What are some ways Hepatitis C is NOT spread?

Hepatitis C is not spread by kissing, hugging, sneezing, coughing, or sharing food, eating utensils or glasses.

Can a person spread Hepatitis C to his or her sex partners?

While the Hepatitis C virus can be passed during sex, it is uncommon. If a person has one, long-term steady sexual partner, the chance is very low that he or she will give Hepatitis C to that person through sexual activity. However, having multiple sex partners, or HIV, or engaging in rough sex can increase the risk of spreading the virus during sex.

What is treatment like?

Current treatment typically involves taking combinations of different antiviral medications for 6 to 12 months. These medications help your body to fight the Hepatitis C virus. Treatment can cause side effects such as flu-like symptoms, depression, weight loss, rash, anemia, and insomnia. Sometimes side effects can disrupt a person’s life and day-to-day activities. Even though side effects are common, many can be managed with the help of your doctor. Some people may stop treatment because of side effects. Never change your dosage or stop taking medication without talking to your doctor. New medications are available that may increase the number of people who get rid of the virus and may reduce the length of treatment.

What about alternative treatments?

You may have heard about some “natural,” herbal, or other products that are sold as treatments or cures for Hepatitis C. There is no herbal supplement or vitamin which has been proven safe and effective for treating Hepatitis C. Some herbal products are actually dangerous for your liver. Just because something is promoted as “natural” does not mean that it is safe to take. Always talk to your doctor before you try any alternative treatment.

Can Hepatitis C be cured?

For many people with Hepatitis C, medical treatment can be successful and can result in the virus no longer being detected in the blood. This is referred to as a sustained viral response, or SVR.

After treatment, is a person protected from Hepatitis C?

No. A person who has been successfully treated and has an SVR is not protected for life from Hepatitis C. A person can get infected with Hepatitis C again if he or she is exposed to blood infected with the Hepatitis C virus.

What else can I do to protect my liver?

You can:
- Ask your doctor before taking any prescription, over-the-counter medications, supplements or vitamins. For instance, some drugs, such as certain pain medications, can potentially damage the liver
- Avoid alcohol since it can increase the speed of liver damage
- Talk to your doctor about getting vaccinated against Hepatitis A and B

You may also want to consider joining a support group for people living with Hepatitis C. Talking with others may help you cope with your feelings and the challenges of living with Hepatitis C.

For more information

Talk to your health professional, call your health department, or visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.
Why should baby boomers get tested for Hepatitis C?

While anyone can get Hepatitis C, more than 75% of adults infected are baby boomers, people born from 1945 through 1965. Most people with Hepatitis C don’t know they are infected.

- Baby boomers are five times more likely to have Hepatitis C.
- Liver disease, liver cancer, and deaths from Hepatitis C are on the rise.
- The longer people live with Hepatitis C, the more likely they are to develop serious, life-threatening liver disease.
- Getting tested can help people learn if they are infected and get them into lifesaving care and treatment.
- Treatments are available that can eliminate the virus from the body and prevent liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

Why do baby boomers have such high rates of Hepatitis C?

The reason that baby boomers have high rates of Hepatitis C is not completely understood. Most boomers are believed to have become infected in the 1970s and 1980s when rates of Hepatitis C were the highest. Since people with Hepatitis C can live for decades without symptoms, many baby boomers are unknowingly living with an infection they got many years ago.

Hepatitis C is primarily spread through contact with blood from an infected person. Many baby boomers could have gotten infected from contaminated blood and blood products before widespread screening of the blood supply began in 1992 and universal precautions were adopted. Others may have become infected from injecting drugs, even if only once in the past. Still, many baby boomers do not know how or when they were infected.

What should baby boomers know about Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a serious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus. Some people who get infected with Hepatitis C are able to clear, or get rid of, the virus, but most people who get infected develop a chronic, or lifelong, infection. Over time, chronic Hepatitis C can cause serious health problems including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer and even death. In fact, Hepatitis C is a leading cause of liver cancer and the leading cause of liver transplants.

People with Hepatitis C:

- Often have no symptoms
- Can live with an infection for decades without feeling sick
- Can be successfully treated with medications
How would someone know they have Hepatitis C?

The only way to know if someone has Hepatitis C is to get tested. Doctors use a blood test, called a Hepatitis C Antibody Test, to find out if a person has ever been infected with Hepatitis C. The Hepatitis C Antibody Test looks for antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus. Antibodies are chemicals released into the bloodstream when someone gets infected.

Hepatitis C Antibody Test results

When getting tested for Hepatitis C, ask when and how test results will be shared. The test results usually take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to come back.

Non-reactive or a negative Hepatitis C Antibody Test

- A non-reactive, or negative, antibody test means that a person does not have Hepatitis C.
- However, if a person has been recently exposed to the Hepatitis C virus, he or she will need to be tested again.

Reactive or a positive Hepatitis C Antibody Test

- A reactive, or positive, antibody test means that Hepatitis C antibodies were found in the blood and a person has been infected with the Hepatitis C virus at some point in time.
- A reactive antibody test does not necessarily mean a person still has Hepatitis C.
- Once people have been infected, they will always have antibodies in their blood. This is true if even if they have cleared the Hepatitis C virus.
- A reactive antibody test requires an additional, follow-up test to determine if a person is currently infected with Hepatitis C.

For more information

Talk to a health professional, call the health department, or visit www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis.
What is hepatitis?

“Hepatitis” means inflammation or swelling of the liver. The liver is an important organ that helps the body digest food, clean blood, and fight germs. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, it does not work very well.

Hepatitis is most often caused by a virus. There are three common types of viral hepatitis: Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. They are all different from each other and are spread from one person to another in different ways. Hepatitis C is the most common type of hepatitis in the United States. It is also the most common type in jails and prisons.

What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a serious liver disease that is caused by the Hepatitis C virus. Hepatitis C is called a silent disease because people can get infected and not know it. Some people who get infected with Hepatitis C are able to clear, or get rid of the virus. For most people who get Hepatitis C, the virus stays in their body for life. Doctors call this chronic Hepatitis C.

How is Hepatitis C spread?

Hepatitis C is most often spread when blood from a person who has Hepatitis C enters the body of someone who is not infected. Here are common ways someone can get Hepatitis C:

**Blood:** The Hepatitis C virus can be found in blood spills, droplets, and blood splatters outside the body. The virus can survive in dried blood for several days. Whenever contact is made with surfaces, equipment, or objects that have infected blood on them—even in amounts too small to see—the virus can be spread to others.

**Drugs:** Most people get the Hepatitis C virus from an infected person when sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs. Even tiny amounts of blood on needles and other types of drug equipment can spread Hepatitis C from one person to another.

**Tattoos/Piercing/Scarring:** The Hepatitis C virus can be spread when tattoo, body art, or piercing equipment has tiny amounts of blood on it. Many people get tattoos, piercings, or other marks while incarcerated. When they share the equipment, it is easy for people to spread the virus and become infected with Hepatitis C.

**Sex:** The Hepatitis C virus can be spread through sex, although this does not happen very often. The virus seems to be more easily spread through sex when a person also has HIV or an STD. People who have rough sex or many sex partners seem to get Hepatitis C more often.
Can Hepatitis C be prevented?
Yes. To prevent Hepatitis C:

• Do not use tattooing, piercing, or cutting equipment that has been used on someone else. This includes such things as sharp objects, ink, needles, or barrels that could have even tiny amounts of blood on them that are too small to see.

• Do not share needles or other equipment, including cookers, cottons, ties, or water to inject drugs.

• Do not share razors, toothbrushes, or other personal items that may have come into contact with another person’s blood.

Why doesn’t cleaning kill the Hepatitis C virus?
Bleaching, boiling, heating with a flame, or using common cleaning fluids, alcohol, or peroxide will not clean needles, tools, and other instruments. These methods are not strong enough to kill the Hepatitis C virus. The virus can still spread easily from one person to another.

How can you tell if someone has Hepatitis C?
You cannot tell if someone has Hepatitis C by looking at them. Doctors use a blood test to look for “antibodies,” or signs in a person’s blood, that they have been infected with the Hepatitis C virus at some point in time. If this test is positive for Hepatitis C antibodies, a different blood test is needed. The second test will tell if the Hepatitis C virus is still in the body. If this test is positive, it means a person currently has Hepatitis C. Additional tests and a medical exam are needed to confirm the diagnosis.

What are the symptoms of Hepatitis C?
Many people with Hepatitis C have no symptoms and do not know they are infected. If a person has symptoms, they can include one or more of the following: fever, stomach pain, feeling very tired, grey-colored stool, not wanting to eat, bone or joint pain, upset stomach, throwing up, dark urine, yellow skin and eyes.

What happens if a person has Hepatitis C?
When a person gets infected with the Hepatitis C virus, different things can happen depending on a person’s age, health, and use of drugs or alcohol. Some people have health problems within a few years of getting infected. Other people live with Hepatitis C for 20 or 30 years without symptoms or feeling sick. Over time, the virus can cause serious health problems for some people.

Can Hepatitis C be treated?
Yes, but not everyone needs medical treatment or can benefit from it. If possible, it is important for people who have Hepatitis C to get regular check-ups. A doctor will run tests to see if the virus is causing damage to the liver. If the liver is damaged, medicines called “antivirals” can sometimes help. These medicines can slow damage to the liver, and may even get rid of the virus.

What can people infected with Hepatitis C do to take care of their liver?
People with Hepatitis C should not use alcohol or street drugs, as these can hurt the liver. Some other products can also hurt people with Hepatitis C, even if they appear to be safe. Check with medical staff before taking any kind of pill, vitamin, herbal product, or medicine.

For more information
Talk to medical staff or your doctor, or have your loved ones talk to a doctor, clinic, or health department. Information on Hepatitis C can be found at: www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.
VIRAL HEPATITIS
Information for Gay and Bisexual Men

What is viral hepatitis?
Viral hepatitis is an infection of the liver caused by one of several viruses. In the United States, the most common types of viral hepatitis are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. While all three types of hepatitis can cause similar symptoms, each virus is spread in different ways.

Are gay and bisexual men at risk for viral hepatitis?
Yes. Among adults, an estimated 10% of new Hepatitis A cases and 20% of new Hepatitis B cases occur in gay or bisexual men. Gay and bisexual men are at increased risk for Hepatitis C if they are involved in high-risk behaviors.

Sharing needles or other equipment used to inject drugs puts a person at risk for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV. Of people with HIV infection, 10% also have Hepatitis B and 25% also have Hepatitis C. New research shows that gay men who are HIV-positive and have multiple sex partners may increase their risk for Hepatitis C.

How is viral hepatitis spread?
- **Hepatitis A** is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter—even in microscopic amounts—from an infected person. Among men who have sexual contact with other men, Hepatitis A can be spread through direct anal-oral contact or contact with fingers or objects that have been in or near the anus of an infected person. Hepatitis A can also be spread through contaminated food or water, which most often occurs in countries where Hepatitis A is common.

- **Hepatitis B** is spread when body fluids—such as semen or blood—from a person infected with the Hepatitis B virus enter the body of someone who is not infected. The Hepatitis B virus is 50–100 times more infectious than HIV and is easily transmitted during sexual activity. Hepatitis B also can be spread through sharing needles, syringes, or other equipment used to inject drugs.

- **Hepatitis C** is spread through contact with the blood of an infected person, primarily through sharing needles, syringes, or other injection drug equipment. Hepatitis C can also be spread when getting tattoos and body piercings in informal settings or with non-sterile instruments. Although uncommon, Hepatitis C can also be spread through sexual contact. Having a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or HIV, sex with multiple partners, or rough sex appears to increase a person’s risk for Hepatitis C.

The best way to protect yourself from Hepatitis A and B is to get vaccinated.
How would someone know if they have viral hepatitis?
Many people do not have symptoms, so the only way to know if you have hepatitis is to get tested. Doctors diagnose hepatitis using one or more blood tests, depending on the type of hepatitis.

How serious is viral hepatitis?
Hepatitis A can only be an acute, or a short term, infection which usually lasts no more than 6 months. Most adults with Hepatitis A feel sick for a few months and usually recover completely without lasting liver damage. Although rare, Hepatitis A can cause liver failure and death.

While Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C can also be acute infections, each can also develop into a chronic, or lifelong, infection. Over time, about 15%–25% of people with chronic hepatitis develop serious liver conditions, including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver failure, and even liver cancer.

What are the symptoms of viral hepatitis?
Many people with viral hepatitis do not have symptoms and do not know they are infected. For acute hepatitis, symptoms usually appear within several weeks to several months of exposure and can last up to 6 months. Symptoms of chronic viral hepatitis can take decades to develop and people can live with an infection for years and not feel sick. When symptoms do appear with chronic hepatitis, they often are a sign of advanced liver disease.

Symptoms for both acute and chronic viral hepatitis can include: fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, grey-colored stools, joint pain, and jaundice.

How is viral hepatitis treated?
For people with acute hepatitis, doctors usually recommend rest, adequate nutrition, fluids, and in certain situations, antiviral medication. In some cases, people with acute hepatitis are hospitalized.

Several treatments are available that can significantly improve health and delay or reverse the effects of liver disease for those with Hepatitis B and new treatments are available for Hepatitis C that can get rid of or clear the virus.

Should gay and bisexual men be vaccinated?
Yes. Experts recommend that all gay and bisexual men be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B. The Hepatitis A and B vaccines can be given separately or as a combination vaccine. The vaccines are safe, effective, and require 2-3 shots given over a period of 6 months depending on the type of vaccine. A person should complete all shots in the series for long-term protection.

There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C. The best way to prevent Hepatitis C is by avoiding behaviors that can spread the disease, especially sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs.

Should gay and bisexual men get tested for viral hepatitis?
It depends upon the type of hepatitis and a person’s risk factors. Testing is not recommended for Hepatitis A.

CDC recommends gay and bisexual men get tested for Hepatitis B. Getting tested can determine if a person is or has been infected with Hepatitis B and if he will need the vaccine series for protection.

Testing for Hepatitis C is not recommended for gay and bisexual men unless they were born from 1945 through 1965, have HIV, or are engaging in risky behaviors.

For more information
Talk to your doctor, call your health department, or visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.
Getting tested for Hepatitis C

• A blood test, called a Hepatitis C Antibody Test, is used to find out if someone has ever been infected with Hepatitis C.

• The Hepatitis C Antibody Test, sometimes called the Anti-HCV Test, looks for antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus. Antibodies are chemicals released into the bloodstream when someone gets infected.

• Test results can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to come back. New rapid tests are now available in some health clinics and the results of these tests are available in 20 to 30 minutes.

• Most people who get infected with the Hepatitis C virus develop a chronic, or lifelong, infection. This is known as chronic Hepatitis C.

• However, some people are able to get rid of, or “clear,” the virus.

What does a non-reactive Hepatitis C Antibody Test result mean?

• A non-reactive or negative antibody test means that you are not currently infected with the Hepatitis C virus.

• However, if you think you might have been exposed to Hepatitis C in the last 6 months, you will need to be tested again.

What does a reactive Hepatitis C Antibody Test result mean?

• A reactive or positive antibody test means you have been infected with the Hepatitis C virus at some point in time.

• Once people have been infected, they will always have antibodies in their blood. This is true if they have cleared the virus or still have the virus in their blood.

• A reactive antibody test does not necessarily mean that you currently have Hepatitis C and a follow-up test is needed.

What to do if the Hepatitis C Antibody Test is reactive

• If the antibody test is reactive, you need an additional test to see if you currently have Hepatitis C. This test is called a RNA test. Another name used for this test is a PCR test.

• If the RNA or follow-up test is:
  - Negative - this means you were infected with Hepatitis C, but the virus has now been cleared from your body.
  - Positive - this means you currently have the virus in your blood.

• If you have a reactive antibody test and a positive follow-up test, you will need to talk to a doctor experienced in diagnosing and treating Hepatitis C.

For more information

Talk to your doctor, call your health department, or visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.
HEPATITIS C
Information on Testing & Diagnosis

What is Hepatitis C?
Hepatitis C is a serious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus. Hepatitis C has been called a silent disease because people can get infected and not know it. Some people who get infected with Hepatitis C are able to clear, or get rid of, the virus, but most people who get infected develop a chronic, or lifelong, infection. Over time, chronic Hepatitis C can cause serious health problems including liver damage, liver failure, and even liver cancer.

How is Hepatitis C spread?
Hepatitis C is spread when blood from a person infected with the Hepatitis C virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. This can happen through different ways including:

- **Injection drug use.** Most people become infected with Hepatitis C by sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs. It is possible to have gotten Hepatitis C from injecting drugs, even if it was just once or many years ago.

- **Blood transfusions and organ transplants.** Before widespread screening of the blood supply began in 1992, Hepatitis C was spread through blood transfusions and organ transplants.

- **Outbreaks.** While uncommon, poor infection control has resulted in outbreaks in health care facilities and residential care facilities.

While rare, spreading Hepatitis C through sex is possible. Having a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or HIV, sex with multiple partners, or rough sex appears to increase a person’s risk for Hepatitis C. Hepatitis C can also be spread when getting tattoos and body piercings in informal settings or with non-sterile instruments. Some people don’t know how or when they got infected.

Who should get tested for Hepatitis C?
- Anyone who has injected drugs, even just once or many years ago
- Anyone with certain medical conditions, such as chronic liver disease and HIV or AIDS
- Anyone who has received donated blood or organs before 1992
- Anyone born from 1945 through 1965
- Anyone with abnormal liver tests or liver disease
- Health and safety workers who have been exposed to blood on the job through a needlestick or injury with a sharp object
- Anyone on hemodialysis
- Anyone born to a mother with Hepatitis C

The only way to know if you have Hepatitis C is to get tested. Early detection can save lives.

Why is it important to get tested for Hepatitis C?
- Millions of Americans have Hepatitis C, but most don’t know it.
- About 8 in 10 people who get infected with Hepatitis C develop a chronic, or lifelong, infection.
- People with Hepatitis C often have no symptoms. Many people can live with an infection for decades without feeling sick.
- Hepatitis C is a leading cause of liver cancer and the leading cause of liver transplants.
- New treatments are available for Hepatitis C that can get rid of the virus.

Continued on next page
Getting tested for Hepatitis C

Doctors use a blood test, called a Hepatitis C Antibody Test, to find out if a person has ever been infected with Hepatitis C. The Hepatitis C Antibody Test, sometimes called the Anti-HCV Test, looks for antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus. Antibodies are chemicals released into the bloodstream when someone gets infected.

Hepatitis C Antibody Test Results

When getting tested for Hepatitis C, ask your doctor when and how you will find out your results. The test results usually take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to come back. A new rapid test is available in some health clinics.

Non-Reactive or Negative Hepatitis C Antibody Test

- A non-reactive or negative antibody test means that a person does not have Hepatitis C.
- However, if a person has been exposed to the Hepatitis C virus in the last 6 months, he or she will need to be tested again.

Reactive or Positive Hepatitis C Antibody Test

- A reactive or positive antibody test means that Hepatitis C antibodies were found in the blood and a person has been infected with the Hepatitis C virus at some point in time.
- Once people have been infected, they will always have antibodies in their blood. This is true if even if they have cleared the Hepatitis C virus.
- A reactive antibody test does not necessarily mean that you have Hepatitis C. A person will need an additional, follow-up test.

Diagnosing Hepatitis C

If the antibody test is reactive, an additional blood test is needed to determine if a person is currently infected with Hepatitis C. This test is called a RNA test. Another name used for this test is a PCR test. If the RNA test is negative, this means a person does not have Hepatitis C. If the RNA test is positive, this means a person currently has Hepatitis C and should talk to a doctor experienced in diagnosing and treating the disease.

For more information

Talk to your doctor, call your health department, or visit www.cdc.gov/hepatitis.
Hepatitis C is a **contagious liver disease** that results from **infection** with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).

An estimate **3.2 million** people in the U.S. have chronic Hepatitis C. Most are unaware of their infection.

Each year **17,000** Americans become infected with Viral Hepatitis C (HCV).

Approximately, **12,000** people die every year from HCV related liver disease.

Any Hepatitis C infected blood enters the body of someone who is not infected.

African Americans make up about **12%** of the U.S. population, and comprise of about **22%** of Hepatitis C cases.

Get tested! The only way to know if someone has hepatitis C is to get tested. New rapid tests are now available and the results can be read within **20 to 30 minutes**.

25% of the people living with HIV are also infected with Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C can be treated. If the liver is damaged, **antiviral medication** can slow damage to the liver and may even get rid of the virus. There is currently **no vaccine** to prevent Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C can be **prevented**. Do not share needles or equipment to inject drugs; **do not use personal items** like razors, glucose monitors and toothbrushes that have come in contact with an infected person’s blood.

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