

ISMS Urges Baby Boomers and Other High-Risk Patients to Get Screened for Hepatitis C.

What is Hepatitis C?

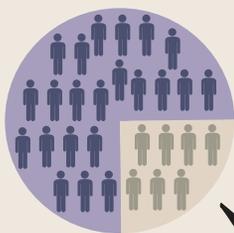
Hepatitis C is a serious and often deadly disease caused by a virus that infects the liver.

- **The virus is blood-borne.** Decades ago, it was sometimes spread through organ transplants or blood transfusions. **Today, the virus is most commonly spread through shared needles or other injectables.**



- **Nearly four million people in the United States have Hepatitis C, with over 150,000 in Illinois.**

- It often lives in the body for decades without any symptoms – **only 25 percent of those infected know they have it.**



Who is at Risk?

Baby Boomers – those born **between 1945 and 1965** – are *five times* more likely than any other age group to have Hepatitis C. **Over 20,000 Boomers died of the disease in 2013.**

- **Other groups that are at increased risk of Hepatitis C include:**

- > People who have **injected illegal drugs, even once.**
- > Recipients of clotting factor concentrates made **before 1987.**
- > Recipients of blood transfusions or solid organ transplants before **July of 1992.**
- > Patients who have **received long-term hemodialysis treatment.**
- > Persons with known **exposures to Hepatitis C**, including health care workers after **accidental needle sticks and blood or organ recipients** from Hepatitis C-positive donors.
- > **All persons infected with HIV;** and
- > **Children born to Hepatitis C-positive mothers.**



Hepatitis C is Treatable and Even Curable

Many cases of Hepatitis C are treatable. Some patients recover without treatment or chronic infection, but for the rest, **new options for treatment or cure have recently become available.**

The first step is seeing your doctor. Make an appointment and encourage friends and family to get screened. The Illinois State Medical Society encourages primary care physicians to follow the CDC and U.S. Preventive Service Task Force guidelines to screen all at-risk patients.

More information and links to the guidelines are available at www.isms.org/HepC

