

University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service

ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



### **JULY 2018**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HEPATITIS C AWARENESS



ccording 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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LEXINGTON, KY 40546

# 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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Written by: Natalie Jones Edited by: Connee Wheeler Designed by: Rusty Manseau Stock images: 123RF.com