



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Health Department Urges Hepatitis C Tests for Baby Boomers

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BURLINGTON, Vt. - The Vermont Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that anyone born between 1945 and 1965 get tested for hepatitis C.

“Baby boomers are three times more likely to have hepatitis C than everyone else,” said Patsy Kelso, state epidemiologist for infectious disease. “Most people with hepatitis C (65 percent to 75 percent) don’t know they have it, and can have no symptoms of the virus for many years, sometimes even decades. The only way to know is with a simple blood test.”

An estimated 12,000 people are living with hepatitis C in Vermont. Approximately 5,000 cases of hepatitis C have been reported to the Vermont Department of Health since 2005. There are 192,504 Vermonters born from 1945 to 1965 who should consider testing.

Three percent of baby boomers are living with the virus, and they make up 75 percent of people with hepatitis C. About 1 to 2 percent of the U.S. population is living with chronic hepatitis C, which is the number one cause of liver cancer and liver transplants.

People can be exposed to the virus through sharing syringes or other drug injection equipment, blood transfusions or organ donations before 1992, and unsafe tattooing or body piercing.

Hepatitis C can cause liver disease and liver cancer over many decades. After being infected there are medications available that will help some people get rid of the virus completely. Other people don’t need treatment, and can stay healthy by taking good care of their livers by avoiding alcohol and acetaminophen.

If you test positive for hepatitis C a healthcare provider can provide care and treatment options.

For more information visit [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov), and the CDC’s campaign **K(no)w More Hepatitis**, or call 802-951-4065.

Visit [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov) for health information, news, and updates, and join us on **Facebook** or follow us on **Twitter**.

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