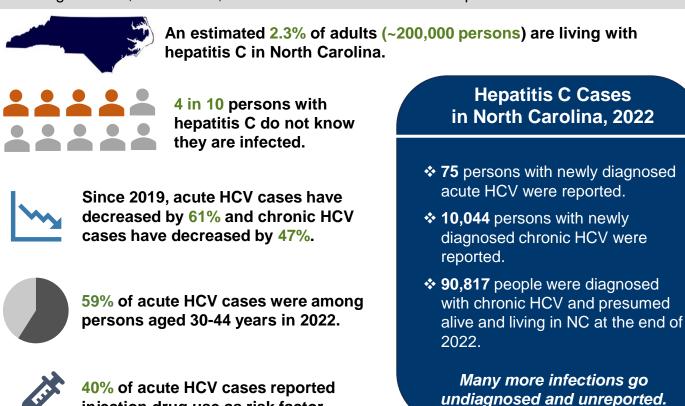
Hepatitis C in North Carolina, 2022



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Division of Public Health

Hepatitis C is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV) and the leading cause of liver cancer and liver transplantation in the United States. Hepatitis C is primarily spread through contact with blood from an infected person. For some persons hepatitis C is a mild short-term (acute) illness lasting a few weeks. However, for most (75-85%) persons with hepatitis C, it becomes a long-term chronic infection. Chronic hepatitis C can cause serious health problems including cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death. Reinfections are possible.



**Hepatitis C Transmission** 

Hepatitis C is spread when blood from an infected person enters the body of another person.

injection drug use as risk factor.



Transmission can occur through sharing needles or "works" when injecting drugs, or through an occupational needlestick exposure.

## Hepatitis C Causes and Symptoms



Symptoms occur in about 20-30% of persons. They include fever, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, jaundice and dark urine.



Symptoms typically occur **2-12 weeks** after exposure.

Contact Us: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Communicable Disease Branch Phone (919) 733-3419 Mailing Address: Communicable Disease Branch Epidemiology Section 1902 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-1902 Created by the HIV/STD/Hepatitis Surveillance Unit 1/25/2024

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# People at Highest Risk For Developing Hepatitis C



Persons born between 1945-1965 Persons who use injection drugs or did so in the past

Persons with a history of incarceration Persons with HIV or receiving maintenance hemodialysis

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Babies born to HCV infected mothers

### Who should get tested for HCV?

A blood test is the only way to know if a person has been infected with HCV. Regular testing is recommended for persons who currently inject drugs or share needles, syringes, or other equipment used to inject drugs and for those currently on maintenance hemodialysis.

#### You should get tested for hepatitis C if you:

- Are 18 years of age or older (get tested at least once in your lifetime)
- Are pregnant (get tested during each pregnancy)
- Currently inject drugs (get tested regularly)
- Have ever injected drugs, even if it was just once or many years ago
- Have HIV
- Have abnormal liver tests or liver disease
- Are on hemodialysis
- Received donated blood or organs before July 1992
- Received clotting factor concentrates before 1987
- Have been exposed to blood from a person who has hepatitis C
- Were born to a mother with hepatitis C

#### \* Risk-based testing for hepatitis C is available through all local health departments at no cost.

## What are my prevention and treatment options for HCV?

**There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C.** The best way to prevent hepatitis C is by avoiding behaviors that spread the disease, especially injecting drugs with non-sterile injection equipment.



**Hepatitis C is curable. Treatment can prevent future health complications.** Current treatments have minimal side effects and are highly effective in curing most people (95%) in 8 to 12 weeks. Reinfection can occur after treatment.

# **Additional Resources**

- The NC Division of Public Health's Viral Hepatitis Program created a regional drug user health resource guide that provides information on low cost/free clinics, housing, food pantry and community resources, hepatitis treatment providers, and syringe access programs. For more information visit: https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/hepatitis/DrugUserHealthResourceGuide\_08102021.pdf.
- The North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (<u>http://www.nchrc.org/</u>) provides harm reduction materials to syringe access programs and community-based organizations to prevent transmission of hepatitis C.
- Injury and Violence Prevention Branch (NC Division of Public Health) oversees the North Carolina Safer Syringe Initiative. For more information: <u>https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/north-carolina-safer-syringe-initiative</u>.

Data Sources: North Carolina Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NC EDSS) (data as of July 1, 2023), Surveillance for Viral Hepatitis, United States, 2000-2021 CDC reports (https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/index.htm). CDC Hepatitis C – faqs, statistics, data & guidelines (https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/index.htm)

State of North Carolina• Roy Cooper, Governor NC DHHS • Kody H. Kinsley, Secretary NC DPH• Susan Kansagra, MD, MBA, Assistant Secretary for Public Health HIV/STD/Hepatitis Surveillance Unit • Erika Samoff, MPH, PhD

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