

## THE RISKS

During the injection process did you observe:

- Blood on your arm?
- Blood on the arm of a comrade in front of you?
- and/or Blood on the jet injector?

Did you experience these breaches in safe injection practices by the vaccinator:

- Failure to hold your arm to receive the injection?
- Failure to hold the jet injector at a 90 degree angle?
- Failure to wipe the jet injector nozzle?
- Failure to remove the jet injector from service once contaminated with blood?

## WHAT TO DO:

If you received inoculations by a jet injector get tested!

- If you have hepatitis C file a claim for compensation benefits. Visit the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers website [www.nacvso.org](http://www.nacvso.org) and click on "Find a Service Officer."

- Seek routine medical care.

- Tell those most important to you.

- Educate yourself by visiting:

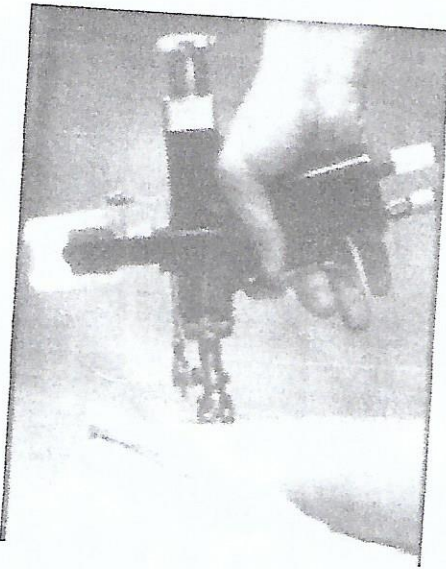
[www.jetinfectors.wordpress.com](http://www.jetinfectors.wordpress.com)

[www.hcvets.com](http://www.hcvets.com)

JET INFECTORS

[www.jetinfectors.wordpress.com](http://www.jetinfectors.wordpress.com)

## VETERANS DID YOU RECEIVE JET INJECTOR INOCULATIONS?



YOU MAY BE

AT RISK OF

HEPATITIS C

Dear Friend,

Thank you for risking your life to serve our nation. I hope you find the following information helpful.

### HEPATITIS C

Hepatitis C is a disease that affects and eventually damages the liver. Hepatitis C progresses asymptotically. The majority of patients report few if not any signs or symptoms. Most people do not know they have hepatitis C until they have a blood test. Hepatitis C can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver transplant, and a plethora of other hepatic manifestations.

**1 in 10 U.S. veterans are infected with hepatitis C.**

Rates are highest (64%) amongst Vietnam era veterans.

### JET INJECTOR = HEPATITIS C RISK FACTOR

The Department of Defense used jet injectors to administer vaccinations to soldiers between 1952 and 2006. The jet injector was placed on a soldier's upper arm where it dispensed a high pressure fluid that penetrated the skin, mixing with bodily tissues and blood. At such high velocity the blood splashed back onto the injector nozzle and into the internal fluid pathway. This allowed for the cross-contamination of blood and blood-borne disease from one soldier to another.

The jet injector is a percutaneous (under the skin) procedure and is no different than the risks of injection drug use and tattooing.

The Board of Veterans Appeals has recognized the jet injector as a risk factor for hepatitis C in a substantial number of court cases.

### THE EVIDENCE

“Despite the lack of any scientific evidence to document the transmission of the hepatitis C virus with airgun injectors, it is biologically plausible.”

-Department of Veterans Affairs, 2004



FORT CAMPBELL

Armed Forces 1998 site visit to MCRD Parris Island found, “Jet injector nozzle’s were frequently contaminated with blood, yet sterilization practices were frequently inadequate or not followed.”



**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# News Release

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Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 9, 2016

## VA Expands Hepatitis C Drug Treatment

*Expanded funding now allows VA to provide increased drug therapy at VA facilities nationwide*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced that it is now able to fund care for all Veterans with hepatitis C for Fiscal Year 2016 regardless of the stage of the patient's liver disease. The move follows increased funding from Congress along with reduced drug prices.

"We're honored to be able to expand treatment for Veterans who are afflicted with hepatitis C," says VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. "To manage limited resources previously, we established treatment priority for the sickest patients. Additionally, if Veterans are currently waiting on an appointment for community care through the Choice Program, they can now turn to their local VA facility for this treatment or can elect to continue to receive treatment through the Choice Program."

VA has long led the country in screening for and treating hepatitis C. VA has treated over 76,000 Veterans infected with hepatitis C and approximately 60,000 have been cured. In addition, since the beginning of 2014, more than 42,000 patients have been treated with the new highly effective antivirals. In fiscal year 2015, VA allocated \$696 million for new hepatitis C drugs (17 percent of the VA's total pharmacy budget) and in fiscal year 2016, VA anticipates spending approximately \$1 billion on hepatitis C drugs. VA expects that with the expansion, many more Veterans will be started on hepatitis C treatment every week this fiscal year.

In addition to furnishing clinical care to Veterans with hepatitis C, VA Research continues to expand the knowledge base regarding the disease through scientific studies focused on effective care, screening, and healthcare delivery including to female Veterans and Veterans with complicated medical conditions in addition to hepatitis C.

For additional information on Hepatitis C treatments Veterans can log onto <http://www.hepatitis.va.gov/patient/hcv/index.asp>.

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## 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 even if they have cleared the hepatitis C virus.
- A reactive antibody test requires an additional, follow-up test (hepatitis C RNA test) to determine if a person is currently infected with hepatitis C.

## What is the New York State Hepatitis C Testing Law?

The NYS Hepatitis C Testing Law requires a hepatitis C screening test be offered to every individual born between 1945 and 1965. If an individual accepts the offer and the hepatitis C screening test is reactive, the health care provider must offer the individual follow-up health care or refer the individual to a health care provider who can provide follow-up health care. The follow-up health care must include a hepatitis C diagnostic test (hepatitis C RNA test).

## For more information

Talk to your doctor or visit [www.health.ny.gov/hepatitisC](http://www.health.ny.gov/hepatitisC) or [www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis).





# Hepatitis C Testing for Baby Boomers (persons born between 1945 and 1965)

## 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.

- 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.

## 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.

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