Overview:

Hepatitis C is increasing dramatically in the United States, particularly among younger adults, and 4 in 10 people don’t even know they have it. Hepatitis C is usually spread through blood, often from injection drug use. Less commonly, hepatitis C is spread through sex or from an infected mother to her infant during pregnancy or childbirth. An acute infection develops when someone is first infected. Some people clear the virus, but most people with acute hepatitis C will develop a long-term (chronic) infection. Left untreated, chronic hepatitis C can cause severe liver damage, liver cancer, and even death. But hepatitis C is curable. The first step to being cured is getting a hepatitis C blood test. CDC now recommends testing:

- Every adult at least once
- Pregnant women during every pregnancy
- Everyone with ongoing risk factors regularly

Multiple generations are at risk for hepatitis C

- The percent of newly reported chronic infections in 2018 was equal among Baby Boomers (born 1945–1965) and Millennials (born 1981–1996), both around 36%, while Generation X (born 1966–1980) made up 23%.
- Increasing rates of acute hepatitis C among people of reproductive age are putting even younger generations at risk.
CDC now recommends one-time screening of all adults 18 years and older and screening all pregnant women during every pregnancy.

People with risk factors, including people who inject drugs, should be tested regularly.

All people with hepatitis C should be provided access to care and treatment.