

Hepatitis C: Know it. Confront it. Get tested.

July 28th is World Hepatitis Day 2014. Canada's slogan this year is "Know your status? Get tested."

Many people with viral hepatitis have no obvious symptoms. In Canada, about 1 in 5 people with Hepatitis C do not know they have the virus. If left untreated, viral hepatitis can lead to severe damage to the liver.

The Canadian Liver Foundation recommends that all adults born between 1945 and 1975 consider being tested for Hepatitis C. As the Hepatitis C virus can be transmitted by any blood-to-blood contact and many adults are unaware of their own risk factors, widespread testing can identify those who contracted Hepatitis C and have been living with it for many years. A simple blood test can determine if you have the virus and there are effective treatments. Your doctor may refer you to a specialist to discuss what is appropriate for you.

Check out the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit web site at <http://www.healthunit.org/infectious/hepc.html> for more information about risk factors, protecting yourself and others, treatment and living with Hepatitis C.

You can also call the Health ACTION Line for more information at 1-800-660-5853.

Like the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit on Facebook for important public health updates.

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References:

Canadian Liver Foundation 2012.

http://www.liver.ca/liver-disease/types/viral_hepatitis/Hepatitis_C.aspx#2

MMWR. Recommendations for the Identification of Chronic Hepatitis C Virus Infection Among Persons Born During 1945–1965. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr6104.pdf>