



Hepatitis C and Known Risks

What is hepatitis C (HCV)?

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that attacks the liver. If left untreated, hepatitis C can cause chronic liver disease, cirrhosis of the liver, liver cancer, and ultimately death. The majority of those infected will experience no symptoms at the time of infection, and the majority of persons infected with hepatitis C are unaware of their infection.

What are the risk factors for HCV?

You have an increased risk of hepatitis C infection if you:

- ▶▶ Were born between 1945 and 1965
- ▶▶ Received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992
- ▶▶ Received a blood product for clotting problems made before 1987
- ▶▶ Shared needles, syringes, or other equipment to inject drugs (past or present)
- ▶▶ Received a needlestick injury in a health care setting
- ▶▶ Were born to a mother who had hepatitis C at the time of your birth
- ▶▶ Received body piercings or tattoos done in an unsafe environment, i.e., using non-sterile equipment
- ▶▶ Were a hemodialysis patient or person who spent many years on dialysis for kidney failure
- ▶▶ Are infected with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)

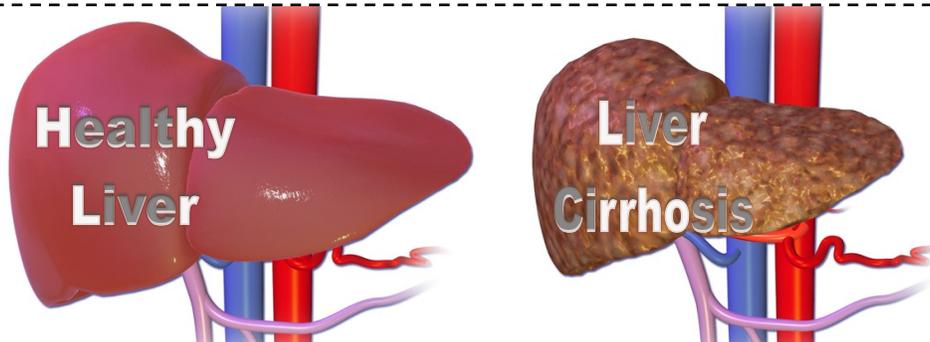
Less common risks include:

- ▶▶ Having sexual contact with a person who is infected with the hepatitis C virus
- ▶▶ Sharing personal care items, such as razors or toothbrushes, that may have come in contact with the blood of an infected person



Why test for HCV?

You can have hepatitis C and not even know it. Hepatitis C is a silent disease that may have few or no symptoms, so the only way to know is to get tested, especially if you have any risk factors. Even if you have no symptoms, you can still spread the disease, and, if left untreated, hepatitis C is associated with complications such as fibrosis, cirrhosis, and hepatocellular cancer and may require a liver transplant. Hepatitis C is the top reason for liver transplants in the U.S. Therefore, screening is important to prevent the spread of hepatitis C and promote clinical interventions before the occurrence of late stages of disease, which may be difficult and costly to treat and may decrease life expectancy.



What are the symptoms of HCV?

Approximately 70%–80% of people with acute hepatitis C do not have any symptoms. Some people, however, can experience mild to severe symptoms soon after being infected, including:

- ▶▶Fever ▶▶Fatigue ▶▶Loss of appetite ▶▶Nausea ▶▶Vomiting ▶▶Abdominal pain ▶▶Dark urine
- ▶▶Clay-colored bowel movements ▶▶Joint pain ▶▶Jaundice (yellow color in the skin or eyes)

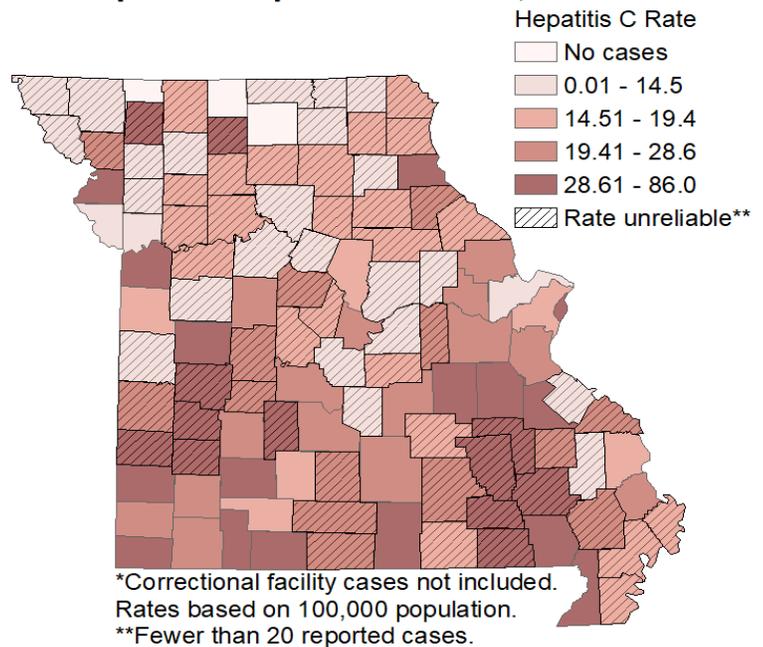
A person can still spread the virus to others even if no symptoms are present. Many people infected with hepatitis C do not know they have the disease.

Hepatitis C Missouri Data

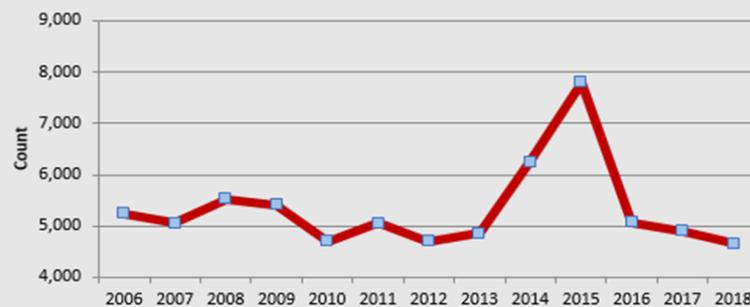
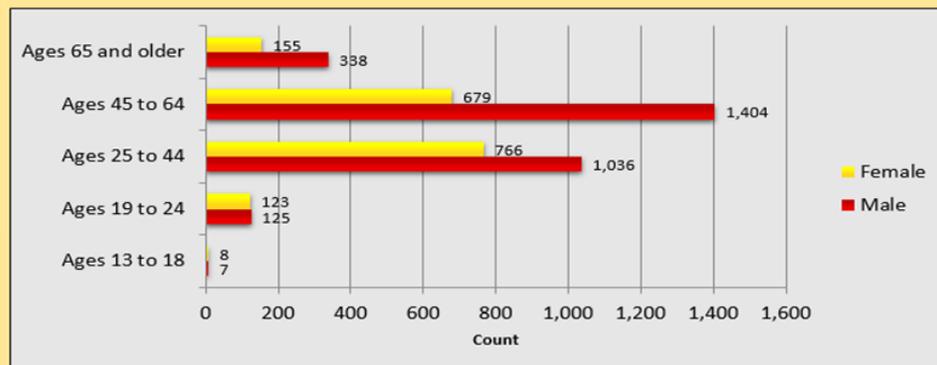
Is HCV present in Missouri?

- ▶▶ Among the 42 states that reported hepatitis C conditions to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2017, Missouri and 13 other states accounted for 76.1% of all reported cases.
- ▶▶ In 2018, Missouri reported 4,656 cases of chronic hepatitis C. This is a decrease of 40.3% from the 7,795 cases reported in 2015, the largest number of chronic cases reported since data collection began. This decrease may not be due to a true decrease in morbidity but rather to the change in case definition that took effect in 2016.
- ▶▶ Missouri residents aged 45 to 64 years represent the highest percentage of all reported chronic hepatitis C infections at 44.7%. The second highest percentage of cases reported was for the group aged 25 to 44 years, at 38.7%.
- ▶▶ At least one new case of chronic hepatitis C was reported in all but two counties/ jurisdictions in Missouri in 2018.
- ▶▶ In 2018, Missouri reported 74 acute hepatitis C cases to CDC, resulting in an incidence rate of 1.2 per 100,000 population. This is higher than the 2017 national average of 1.0 cases per 100,000 population, which is the most recent national rate available. CDC estimates that the actual national number of acute hepatitis C cases is 14 times greater than the number reported.

Reported Hepatitis C Rates*, 2018



HCV Chronic Infections, by Sex and Age, Missouri, 2018



Number of HCV Cases in Missouri, by Year

2017 CDC/U.S. Rates: CDC, "Surveillance for Viral Hepatitis – United States, 2017." Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/2017surveillance/index.htm>. Accessed 09-19-2019.

2018 Missouri Figures: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Reportable Disease Informatics. Missouri Health Surveillance Information System (WebSurv). Annual dataset frozen 07-01-2019. All other sources referenced in this fact sheet are fully cited in the *Epidemiologic Profile of Viral Hepatitis in Missouri-2015*, which is available at <http://health.mo.gov/data/hivstdaids/data.php>. Publication Date: October 2019