



# Hepatitis C Deaths in Missouri

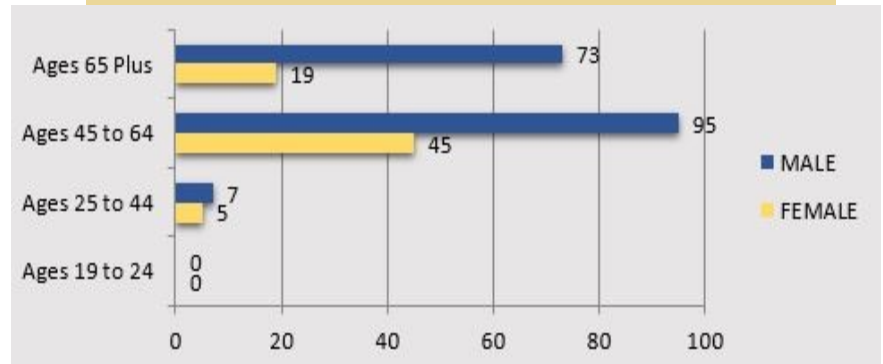
## How many deaths are related to hepatitis C?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hepatitis C contributes to more deaths in the United States than any other communicable disease, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and tuberculosis (TB). As such, more Missourians infected with hepatitis C die each year than Missourians infected with HIV. According to death certificates that denote hepatitis C as a related cause of death, 244 Missourians infected with hepatitis C died in 2018, compared to 94 people infected with HIV. However, hepatitis C is frequently underreported as a related cause of death on death certificates; therefore, the number of deaths associated with hepatitis C is likely much higher.

## Why is hepatitis C deadly?

Approximately 75% of people infected with hepatitis C are unaware of their infection. People infected with hepatitis C may experience only very mild symptoms or no symptoms at all until many years after initial infection. If left untreated, hepatitis C may lead to chronic liver disease such as cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer. People infected with hepatitis C are also at greater risk of becoming infected with another infectious disease, such as HIV or TB. When a person is co-infected with hepatitis C and another infectious disease, the effects of the co-infection are exacerbated and increase the likelihood of death.

## Hepatitis C Deaths by Age and Gender, Missouri, 2018



## Who is at most risk?

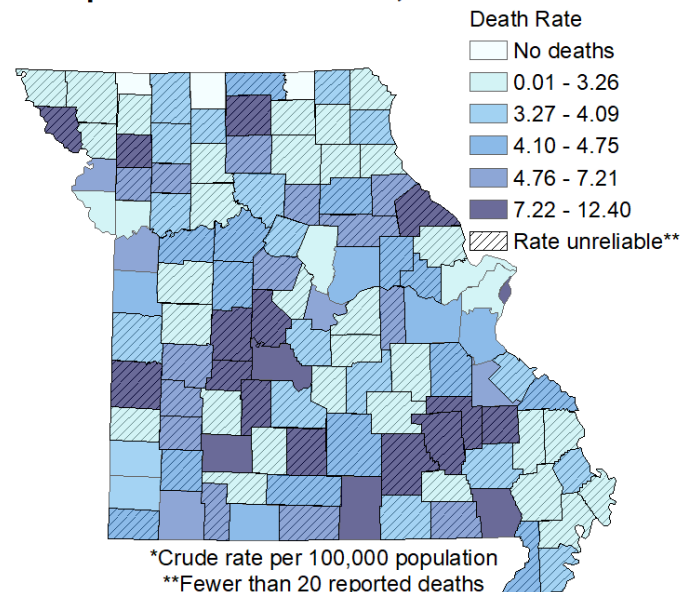
### Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers, or people born from 1945 to 1965, are now being diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C and associated complications. Therefore, screening of Baby Boomers is important to promote clinical interventions before the occurrence of late stages of disease, which decrease life expectancy.

### People who inject drugs (PWID)

Approximately 32% of PWID become positive for hepatitis C within one year and 53% of PWID become positive within five years. Engaging in behaviors associated with injection drug use has become the primary risk factor for contracting hepatitis C. The majority of PWID who become infected with hepatitis C are 40 years old or younger. As such, many newly infected PWID may not experience symptoms for decades after infection. Due to the lack of symptoms, the risk of spreading the disease increases. The likelihood of death also increases as the disease and related issues progress.

## Hepatitis C Death Rates\*, 2009-2018



An EO/AA employer: Services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis. Hearing- and speech-impaired citizens can dial 711.

2018 Missouri Death Figures: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, compiled by the Bureau of Health Care Analysis and Data Dissemination from information on death certificates. Received 09-17-2019.

National data: CDC. "Surveillance for Viral Hepatitis—United States, 2017." Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/2017surveillance/index.htm>. Accessed 10-10-2019.

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>.