

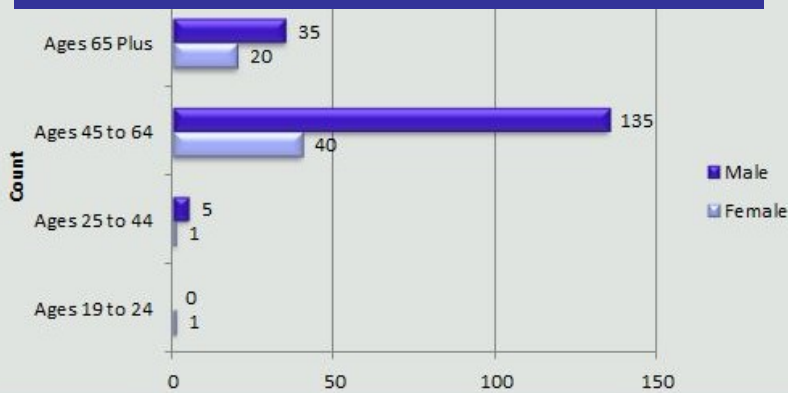


Hepatitis C Deaths in Missouri

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, 237 Missourians infected with hepatitis C died in 2015, compared to 76 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.

Hepatitis C Deaths by Age and Gender, Missouri, 2015



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.

Who is at most risk?

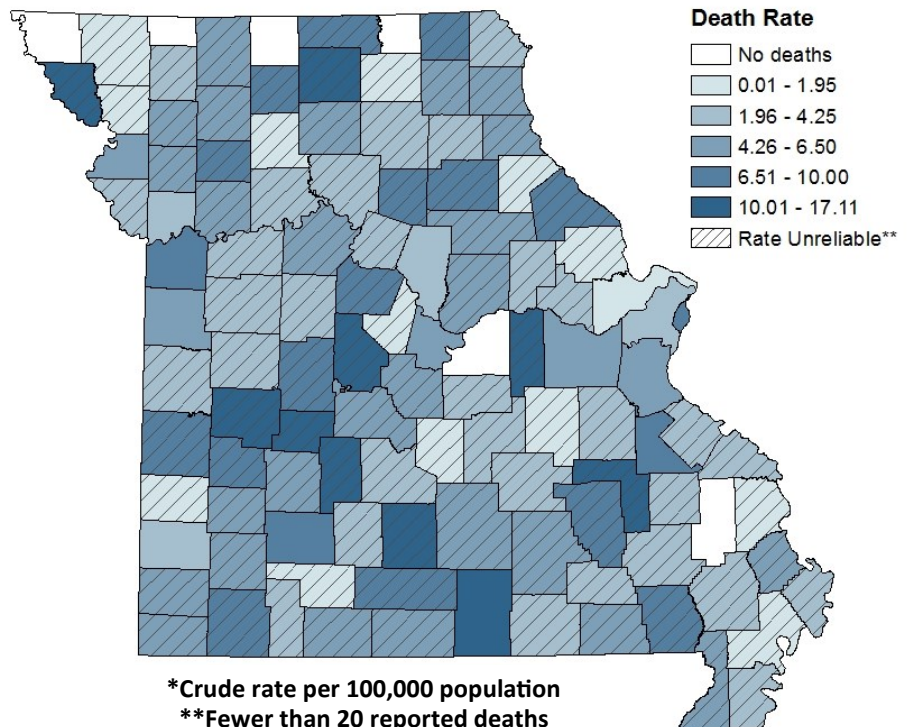
Baby Boomers

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 30 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*, 2011 - 2015



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All 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>

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