



# Press Release

Contact: Kara Davis  
Phone: (217) 735-2317

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 17, 2015

## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES FREE TESTING FOR HEPATITIS C**

The health department is now offering FREE Hepatitis C tests. The FREE tests will only be for those people born from 1945-1965 and for those people that are considered high risk. You are considered high risk if you:

- Are a health care worker who has been exposed to infected blood, such as may happen if an infected needle pierces your skin
- Have ever injected or inhaled illicit drugs
- Have HIV
- Received a piercing or tattoo in an unclean environment using unsterile equipment
- Received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992
- Received clotting factor concentrates before 1987
- Received hemodialysis treatments for a long period of time
- Were born to a woman with a hepatitis C infection
- Were ever in prison

This free blood test will be available until October 1, 2015 and will be by appointment only. If you would like a test and were not born between 1945-1965 and are not considered high risk, the cost of the test is \$40 and can be billed to your insurance company.

~ MORE ~

Hepatitis C is a chronic infection that affects an estimated 130 million to 150 million people and results in 350,000 to 500,000 deaths a year. Seventy-five percent of the 2.7 million Americans infected with hepatitis C are baby boomers - persons born between 1945 and 1965. Most are not even aware they are infected. In addition, most new hepatitis C infections are among injection drugs users, especially those under age 30. A specific blood test is the only way to detect the hepatitis C virus.

The Hepatitis C virus attacks the liver. If left undiagnosed and untreated, hepatitis C can lead to serious liver disease such as cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer. In recent years, U.S. death rates due to chronic hepatitis C infection have outpaced death rates due to HIV infection. Hepatitis C is spread from blood-to-blood contact. The most common risks associated with hepatitis C transmission are injection drug use, blood transfusion, or organ transplantation prior to 1992. Approximately one-quarter of HIV-infected persons are also infected with hepatitis C.

The Logan County Department of Public Health is open Monday-Friday from 7:30-4:30. Please call for an appointment 217-735-2317.

-End-

