

A Silent Epidemic – Baby Boomers Beware

Yes, this one is for men and women of a certain age group the Boomers, give or take a few years. Besides our creaking bones, squinting eyes, and growing old gracefully, there is a very real physical problem to be taken seriously. It can in fact be a silent killer. Most people are not even aware they have this disease, until a medical practitioner has exhausted all other possibilities.

A change is in the air. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) has been pushing to make screening for this disease mandatory. Several years ago, people needing blood with a surgery, may have contracted Hepatitis C. The screening of blood donations did not come in to effect until 1992.

Hepatitis C can lay dormant in your system for decades. Some people never know they have it and never have problems as a result of having the virus. But Hepatitis C must be taken seriously, if you have had surgery prior to 1992. Other forms of contracting the disease are drug use, and exchange of blood by razors etc.

The virus can in fact lead to Cirrhosis and eventually Liver Cancer. A simple blood test can determine if you have ever been exposed to the virus. If you are wondering if there are symptoms to look for the answer is mixed. You may not have symptoms at all. There are also studies indicating the virus can mimic arthritis symptoms, ironic at the age when arthritis may generally hit people.

The goal here is not to scare people, rather to make people aware of the disease being labeled the Baby Boomer Disease, by the CDC. If you had surgery as a child or young adult, or have any reason to wonder if you have been exposed to hepatitis c, get it checked. It is a simple blood test. Catching the disease before it scars your liver too extensively, helps make it manageable. There are treatments available to prevent further liver damage.

You may remember Mickey Mantle. Good old Mickey had Hepatitis C. Others with the disease include: Pamela Anderson, Naomi Judd, Jim Nabors, Etta James, Natalie Cole and Evil Knievel. Many more people are infected, some famous, some not so famous. It is a disease not just for celebrities and rock stars. It is a disease for anyone having had surgery prior to the implementation of thorough blood testing.

One important reason to determine if you could possibly have Hepatitis C is make sure, with age and new medications, that you are not taking anything with the capability of damaging your liver, due to the hepatitis. A diagnosis of Hep C does not necessarily mean the disease will progress to cirrhosis or cancer, but it is worth knowing if you are infected. It may answer some health questions you may currently be asking.

Baby Boomers talk to your doctor. Ask if you should be tested. Take care of yourself. Many doctors are not in touch with the perils of this disease if it is out of their particular field. It is up to you to simply inquire.