

# CHRONIC HEPATITIS C IS ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN CALIFORNIA

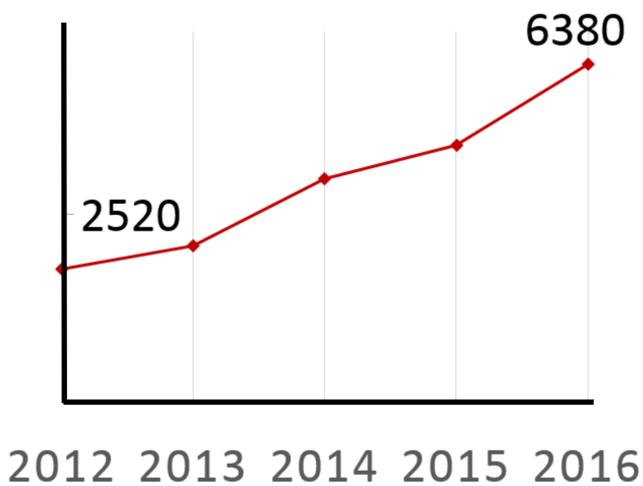
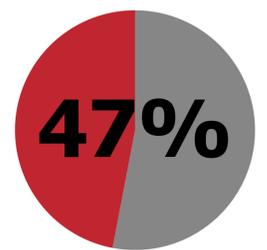


**Hepatitis C virus is highly infectious and easily transmitted, even in microscopic amounts of blood.** Today, transmission of hepatitis C is primarily through sharing needles, syringes or other drug injection equipment.



- **About 400,000 Californians live with chronic hepatitis C, but many do not know they are infected.** Chronic hepatitis C is a serious disease that can result in long-term health problems, even death. New treatment can cure hepatitis C in as little as two months.

- **Baby boomers (born from 1945-1965) account for almost half of the hepatitis C cases reported in California.** Many people in this age group do not know how they were infected. It is possible that infections occurred in health care settings or through blood transfusion or through other routes. The blood supply is now screened for hepatitis C and is not a source of infection.



- **The number of hepatitis C cases among young people ages 15-29 has more than doubled in the last five years.**
- Sharing syringes and other injection drug use equipment puts people at increased risk for hepatitis C infection. As the number of heroin overdoses among young people in California has increased during this time, so has the risk of hepatitis C transmission.

## How can we fight rising hepatitis C rates in California?

- ✓ All Californians who have ever injected drugs, even once, and all people born between 1945 and 1965 should talk to their doctors about getting tested for hepatitis C.
- ✓ Patients who test positive should receive care from an experienced provider.
- ✓ Prevention strategies, including access to sterile syringes and safe injection equipment and treatment for opioid use disorders, can cut the rate of new hepatitis C infections among young people who inject drugs by half.

### Sources:

- Chronic Hepatitis C Infections in California Surveillance Report, 2016: Executive Summary, California Department of Public Health: <https://go.usa.gov/xENvu>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hepatitis C and Baby Boomers: <https://go.usa.gov/xENwC>
- Hepatitis C and Opioid Use Rates among Young Adults in California – Infographic (PDF): <https://go.usa.gov/xENFJ>

