Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Screening

What is HCV?
HCV is the most common chronic bloodborne infection in the United States. A person becomes infected with HCV through contact with blood or body fluids from a person with the virus.

What does HCV do to me?
HCV causes Hepatitis C, inflammation of the liver. Chronic Hepatitis C inflammation leads to liver diseases like cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver cancer, and deaths from the decrease in liver function.

I feel fine, why should I be tested?
Many people go many years with no signs of the virus being in the body. HCV may be doing damage to the liver, even without outward signs. Chronic Hepatitis C symptoms may not be present but could be fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, joint pain, grey stool, or jaundice (yellowing of skin or eyes).

Why should I get screened?
Chronic Hepatitis C is on the rise and Baby Boomers are 5x more likely to have HCV. The longer you have had Hepatitis C, the more likely you are to have serious, life-threatening liver damage.

Screening can be done at Upstate University Hospital for the Hepatitis C virus (HCV).

Please consider HCV screening if you are at risk because you:

- Were born between 1945 and 1965 (Baby Boomer generation).
- Injected illegal drugs, even if it was once and long ago.
- Inhaled (snorted) illegal drugs up the nose.
- Got clotting factor concentrates before 1987.
- Got blood transfusion or solid organ transplants before July 1992.
- Received long term hemodialysis treatments.
- Were exposed to Hepatitis C Virus through a blood transfusion.
- Are a long term dialysis patient.
- Have liver disease or abnormal liver blood tests.
- Got a tattoo or piercing from an unlicensed or unclean person.
- Have had multiple partners or rough sex.
- Have HIV.

Is HCV treatable?
There are treatments for Hepatitis C that could eliminate the virus in your body and prevent liver disease. Hepatitis C is treatable but not everyone can be treated. Medications and treatments may take between 6 months and 1 year to complete and the medications do have side effects. If you are positive for HCV your provider can discuss what your options are.

CDC website on Hepatitis C Fact Sheets:
http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/index.htm