# Sneak Attack

How hep C can wreck havoc on our bodies

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When the hepatitis C virus (HCV) strikes, sometimes there are no signs of an infection. But if you're unaware you have hep C, the virus remains in your body undetected and untreated.

This means that as the years pass, HCV can affect many parts of the body and eventually lead to serious liver problems.

But although the liver is the organ most directly affected by hep C, the disease can also damage the brain, blood vessels, bones, joints, kidneys and pancreas and can cause painful conditions or life-threatening illnesses to develop.

Several different blood tests are used to detect hepatitis C. A doctor may order just one or a combination of these tests, explains the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The agency stresses that once diagnosed, hep C can be treated to stop it from becoming a chronic illness. And even if HCV is already chronic, there's effective therapy to cure the disease and stop further damage to the liver.

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