Hepatitis C Screening

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recently made recommendations that all adults born between 1945 and 1965 be screened for Hepatitis C. Hepatitis C is a chronic viral infection that is most often asymptomatic. If left untreated, Hepatitis C can lead to chronic liver damage (cirrhosis) and increase one's risk of liver cancer. Additionally, those with Hepatitis C infection may have increased reactions to other liver toxic agents (alcohol, certain medications). The CDC picked that age range based on estimates of whom is most likely to be infected.

Screening for Hepatitis C requires a one-time, non-fasting lab test. I am comfortable with the CDC recommendations and recommend patients proceed with screening. To simplify this process, there is a blank order on the website which is linked here. You can just fill in your name, birth date, and test date and bring the order to your local Quest or Labcorp Draw Center.

Screening is recommended for all persons in this age range, regardless of risk factors. Those with prior history of risk factors for Hepatitis C infection should be screened regardless of age. Those with ongoing risk factors for Hepatitis C may need to be screened more frequently. The following people are known to be at increased risk for HCV infection:

- Current or former injection drug users, including those who injected only once many years ago
- Recipients of clotting factor concentrates made before 1987, when more advanced methods for manufacturing those products were developed
- Recipients of blood transfusions or solid organ transplants before July 1992, when better testing of blood donors became available
- Chronic hemodialysis patients
- Persons with known exposures to HCV, such as
  - health care workers after needlesticks involving HCV-positive blood
  - recipients of blood or organs from a donor who tested HCV-positive

- Persons with HIV infection
- Children born to HCV-positive mothers
Lab Order for Hepatitis C

Click here for more information on Hepatitis C