

## **Raleigh Heart Clinic, Beckley, West Virginia**

### **Hepatitis and Bloodborne Viruses**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR), Bureau for Public Health (BPH) and the Beckley-Raleigh County Health Department, with the assistance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted an investigation of several cases of viral hepatitis that appear to be associated with stress tests performed at the Raleigh Heart Clinic in Beckley, West Virginia. Two groups of hepatitis C infections (affecting 8 patients receiving cardiac stress tests on 3 different days) and two groups of hepatitis B infections (affecting 4 patients receiving cardiac stress tests on 2 different days) have been identified among patients who had injectable medications administered during their stress tests at the clinic.

#### **How and when did this situation get reported to the health department?**

The investigation began in November 2014 when a patient of Raleigh Heart Clinic had a positive blood test for hepatitis C after a stress test with injectable medication at the clinic. This patient had none of the usual risk factors for hepatitis C. An investigation was conducted and additional cases of hepatitis C and B were identified among patients who had injectable medications administered during their stress test at Raleigh Heart Clinic.

#### **Who is being notified?**

Any patient of the Raleigh Heart Clinic who was identified as having injectable medications administered during their stress test at Raleigh Heart Clinic during the timeframe of March 1, 2012 to March 27, 2015 is being notified by United States mail.

#### **I did not receive a notification letter, but I did receive a stress test at Raleigh Heart Clinic prior to March 1, 2012, should I be tested?**

Any patient who received a stress test at the Raleigh Heart Clinic prior to March 1, 2012, should talk to their doctor about whether or not they should be tested. Persons who want to be tested may receive testing at their healthcare provider or local health department.

#### **Why are patients being notified?**

Groups of patients who have hepatitis C and hepatitis B had stress tests at Raleigh Heart Clinic; it is possible that the infections are related to the stress tests. Stress tests with injectable medications were performed at this clinic but new safety measures were not implemented until March 27, 2015. Patients who have been identified from clinic records as having a stress test at Raleigh Heart Clinic from March 1, 2012 to March 27, 2015 are being notified.

#### **What is being recommended?**

The state and local health departments encourage individuals to get tested for hepatitis B, C and HIV. Hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV can be transmitted from contaminated equipment, such as needles and syringes used for injections and other equipment used in administering medications that go into a vein.

For patients of the Raleigh Heart Clinic, the following laboratory tests are recommended:

1. Hepatitis B surface antigen

2. Hepatitis C antibody with reflex to HCV nucleic acid testing (NAT) if positive
3. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) using a fourth generation immunoassay

### **Has a case of HIV been found among patients of the Raleigh Heart Clinic?**

So far, investigators have not found any evidence of transmission of HIV. Since HIV can be transmitted in the same manner as the hepatitis viruses, it is included in the list of recommended tests.

### **How were the hepatitis viruses transmitted?**

The investigation has not identified a specific mode of transmission; however, the epidemiologic evidence and laboratory testing of the individual cases have linked them together. Therefore investigators have concluded that the cases are possibly linked to stress tests at this clinic. The stress test required the use of injectable medications through an IV line. In the past, outbreaks of hepatitis B and hepatitis C have been related to reuse of needles and syringes in vials that contain medication designed to be used for single patients.

### **Has HBV, HCV, or HIV transmission occurred in other medical settings?**

Yes, but fortunately this does not occur frequently. HIV, HCV and HBV have all been documented to be transmitted in healthcare settings. CDC maintains a list of outbreaks of hepatitis associated with healthcare settings. See [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/healthcarehepoutbreaktable.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/healthcarehepoutbreaktable.htm).

### **How do patients get exposed to Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV in a medical or healthcare settings?**

When healthcare professionals do not follow proper infection control procedures while performing injections or other procedures that involve breaking the skin, patients can be at risk to acquire these diseases. Proper infection control techniques include thorough disinfection and sterilization of instruments, proper disposal of sharp objects, proper use of single dose and multi-dose medication vials, and never reusing items such as needles and syringes between patients.

### **What procedures should I be worried about?**

Any procedure in which skin is broken, such injections and equipment used in administering medications that go into a vein or an IV line, can potentially place a person at risk for exposure to a blood borne virus.

### **What actions have been taken by the health department?**

The state and local health department instructed the clinic to use only single patient dose vials and single use medications. The State Health Department also instructed the clinic to switch to needless injection systems. Additionally, the physician and clinic staff were provided with information on infection control and injection safety and advised to obtain training on these topics. The clinic implemented these recommendations beginning March 27, 2015. The local health department has since visited the clinic to verify the implementation of these recommendations.

### **How are Raleigh Heart Clinic patients being notified?**

A letter is being sent to Raleigh Heart Clinic patients encouraging them to get tested for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV. The letter contains laboratory testing recommendations, along with information about hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV.

### **What is the purpose of testing?**

The purpose of testing is to identify infections with hepatitis B, hepatitis C and/or HIV. Identifying a viral infection allows a person to get timely and appropriate medical care. Medications are available that can treat hepatitis B and HIV and new medications can cure hepatitis C.

### **Where can patients get blood tests for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV?**

Patients can choose to go to Raleigh Heart Clinic, their own doctor or healthcare provider. In addition, any resident of West Virginia may contact their county health department to make an appointment to be tested. A list of health departments can be found at [www.dhhr.wv.gov/localhealth/pages/map.aspx](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/localhealth/pages/map.aspx).

### **How long will it take to get results from the blood tests?**

Ask your doctor or the facility which is providing the testing how long it will take for you to get your results. Typically, patients can expect about a week to get results. Also, ask your provider how you will be notified of the results.

### **What does the health department do about healthcare-associated infections?**

Local health departments and BPH investigate reports of cases of hepatitis and other infectious diseases, especially when they occur in people with no known risk factors. Health departments try to work collaboratively with healthcare providers and healthcare facilities to correct problems when they are identified. You can get more information about healthcare outbreaks at [www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/ob/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/ob/Pages/default.aspx).

### **Where can I find additional information?**

Information is available through a web page linked to [www.dide.wv.gov](http://www.dide.wv.gov)

Patients and healthcare providers can also call the information line at 1-800-642-8244, which will be available to answer your questions between 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Below is a list of resources:

**1. Hepatitis B Information:**

WVDHHR: [www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/AtoZ/Pages/HepB.aspx](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/AtoZ/Pages/HepB.aspx)

CDC: [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/index.htm)

**2. Hepatitis C Information:**

WVDHHR: [www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/AtoZ/Pages/HepC.aspx](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/AtoZ/Pages/HepC.aspx)

CDC: [www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/index.htm)

**3. HIV Information:**

WVDHHR: [www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/std-hiv-hep/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/std-hiv-hep/Pages/default.aspx)

CDC: [www.cdc.gov/hiv/](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/)

**4. American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases Guidelines:**

[www.aasld.org/practiceguidelines/pages/default.aspx](http://www.aasld.org/practiceguidelines/pages/default.aspx)