

## **Who is at Risk for HCV?**

Transmission of hepatitis C virus occurs through blood contact; injection drug use is a risk factor for HCV infection that is widely reported in both Oklahoma and the greater United States. While the risk of sexual transmission of hepatitis C is low, it increases with rough sexual practices that could involve the tearing or bruising of skin or membrane. This risk is particularly high with unprotected sex. Hepatitis C is not transmitted by kissing, hugging, breast milk, sharing a toilet, food or water. Healthcare workers could be at risk for hepatitis C through needlestick injuries or like exposure. Children born to mothers with hepatitis C are also at risk, as well as individuals who share needles and other equipment used to inject drugs, including intranasal drugs. While people born between 1945-1965 account for most of the chronic HCV cases in the U.S., there has been an increase in cases amongst younger populations.