

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Hepatitis C and B12 Tests Available at the Ruby Valley Hospital Health Fair

The Ruby Valley Hospital is adding two blood tests to the offerings at the annual Health Fair, April 12-13 from 7am to 11am. Tests for Hepatitis C and Vitamin B12 Deficiency will be available, along with the Chemistry and CBC panel, Prostate Specific Antigens (PSA), Vitamin D Deficiency and Hemoglobin A1C. The Hospital's Health Fair offers blood testing to the Ruby Valley community at significantly reduced prices. In determining whether these new tests could provide insights your physical well-being, the following information might be helpful.

Hepatitis C (Hep C) is a serious, life-threatening liver disease that can result in cirrhosis and liver cancer. It is spread through contact with the blood of a person infected with Hepatitis C. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is encouraging all baby boomers (born between 1945-1965) to be tested for Hep C as this age group comprises more than 75% of those infected in the United States. In the past, Hep C was considered a disease primarily infecting intravenous drug users or healthcare professionals that work with needles and blood. However, it has been found that lack of blood screening prior to 1992 has resulted in undetected infections through donated blood and blood products. It also can be spread by sexual activity. Deaths related to Hep C are on the rise among baby boomers. Symptoms from chronic Hep C often don't arise until advanced liver problems develop. Webmd.com offers 5 reasons to be tested –

1. You can have the disease even if you feel fine
2. The test is quick and easy
3. You can protect your family and friends
4. Treatments can suppress or even wipe out the virus
5. Early treatment can help you prevent liver cancer or liver failure.

If you're over 50 and haven't been tested for Hep C, it would be prudent to have the test.

Vitamin B12 is only available in its natural form from animal products such as eggs, dairy, fish and red meat. It's used to produce and maintain nerves, red blood cells and DNA. Deficiencies of B12 can cause an array of problems including diminished memory and balance, tingling of extremities,

weakness and loss of appetite. It is estimated that 20-40% of adults over age 60 are deficient in B12. Vitamin B12 deficiency is also frequently found in long distance runners and supplemental B12 can be taken to enhance energy maintenance.

Dr. Roman Hendrickson specializes in geriatric medicine at the Ruby Valley Hospital and remarked that he sees quite a few patients with B12 deficiency. “Between ages 55 and 60, adults can start having absorption problems and can’t absorb enough B12 from their food. While memory can be helped with B12 injections, the greatest improvement is generally in the patient’s energy level.”

A B12 test is generally recommended if you are a vegan, a nursing mother, over 60 years old, using a diabetic drug like metformin, using a PPI drug regularly for heartburn or GERD or have absorption issues (Crohn’s disease, celiac, colitis, etc.)

For information on the other tests offered at the Ruby Valley Health Fair, please visit our website at www.RubyValleyHospital.com. On the front page blog, look for “What Can Be Learned From Blood Tests”.

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For the Ruby Valley Hospital