

RISK:

STORIES AND FACTS ABOUT HEPATITIS C

PART 2



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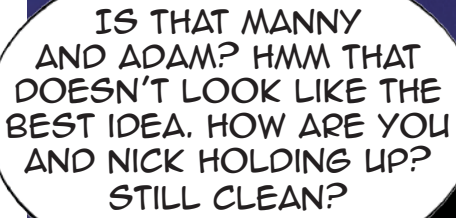


IN CASE YOU MISSED PART 1-IN THE FAMILY

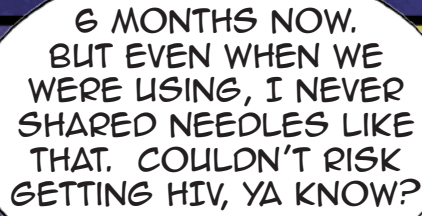
MANUEL, A MAN IN HIS EARLY 20'S IS HIDING A HEROIN ADDICTION. HE NEEDS A HIT, SO HE GOES TO HIS FRIEND ADAM'S HOUSE, WHERE THEY SHARE A NEEDLE, DESPITE THE CHANCE THAT ADAM MAY HAVE HEPATITIS C...

TO SEE THE WHOLE STORY, VISIT: WWW.BPHC.ORG/HEPCCOMIC

PART 2 - STAYING CLEAN



IS THAT MANNY AND ADAM? HMM THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE BEST IDEA. HOW ARE YOU AND NICK HOLDING UP? STILL CLEAN?

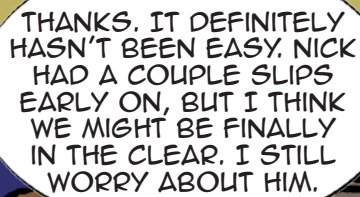


6 MONTHS NOW. BUT EVEN WHEN WE WERE USING, I NEVER SHARED NEEDLES LIKE THAT. COULDN'T RISK GETTING HIV, YA KNOW?

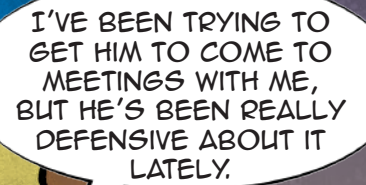
Sharing equipment puts users at risk for several diseases, including HIV and hepatitis C. Hepatitis C is more common and more easily transmitted through sharing drug equipment.



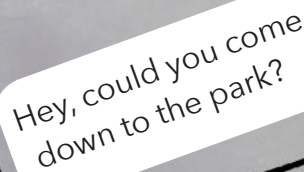
WOW, THAT'S GREAT.



THANKS. IT DEFINITELY HASN'T BEEN EASY. NICK HAD A COUPLE SLIPS EARLY ON, BUT I THINK WE MIGHT BE FINALLY IN THE CLEAR. I STILL WORRY ABOUT HIM.



I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET HIM TO COME TO MEETINGS WITH ME, BUT HE'S BEEN REALLY DEFENSIVE ABOUT IT LATELY.



Hey, could you come down to the park?

HMM... I WONDER WHY HE WANTS TO MEET THERE

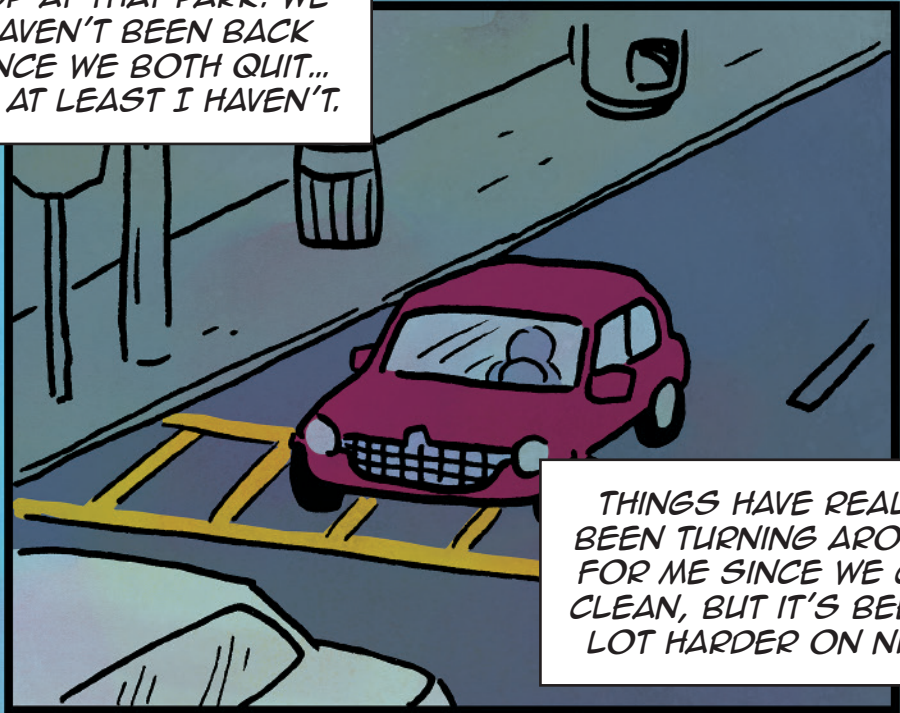
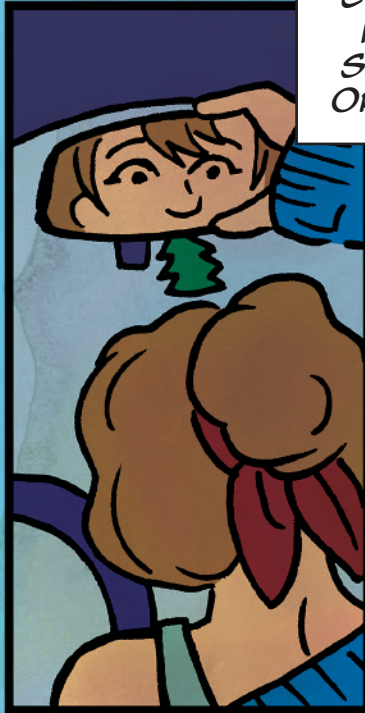


I GOTTA GO, NICK WANTS TO MEET UP

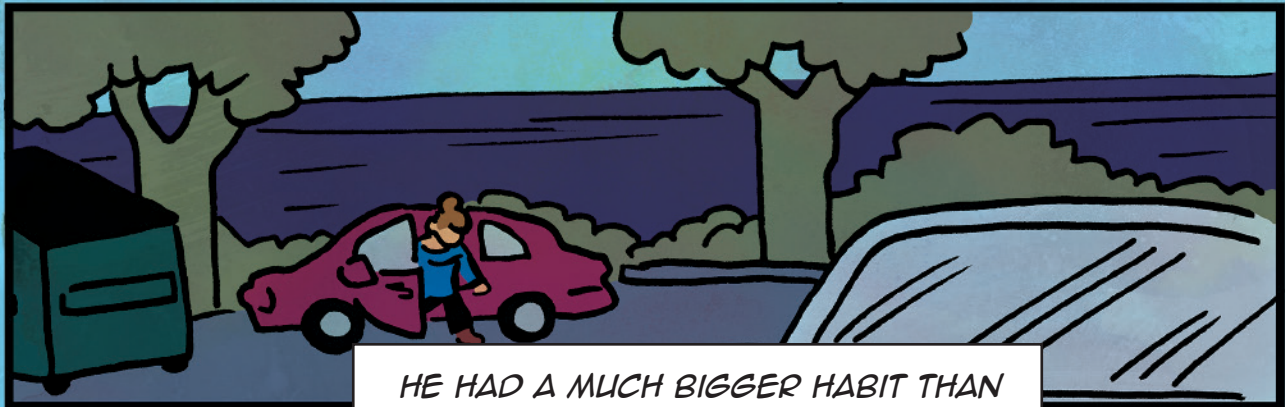


SEE YA

NICK AND I USED TO
COP AT THAT PARK. WE
HAVEN'T BEEN BACK
SINCE WE BOTH QUIT...
OR AT LEAST I HAVEN'T.



THINGS HAVE REALLY
BEEN TURNING AROUND
FOR ME SINCE WE GOT
CLEAN, BUT IT'S BEEN A
LOT HARDER ON NICK.



HE HAD A MUCH BIGGER HABIT THAN
I DID AND WAS USING FOR A LONG
TIME. I ONLY USED WITH HIM, AND
ONLY A COUPLE OF TIMES.



HEY KAT

WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE? YOU LOOK AWFUL... DO YOU FEEL OKAY?

IT'S BEEN A ROUGH DAY. GOT INTO AN ARGUMENT AT WORK AND THEY FIRED ME. IT WASN'T EVEN...

WHAT? WHAT DID YOU DO NOW?


WELL THANKS FOR THE SYMPATHY, IT WASN'T MY FAULT...

£*\$#


GASP

WHAT'S IN THAT BAG?! YOU'RE USING AGAIN?? AFTER ALL THE HARD WORK WE PUT IN, WHY DID...

I CAN'T TALK TO YOU ABOUT THESE THINGS WHEN YOU'RE ALWAYS ACTING LIKE YOU'RE BETTER THAN ME!



I WAS JUST TRYING TO LOOK OUT FOR YOU...



WELL I DON'T NEED YOU TO!



FINE THEN



HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN LYING TO ME ABOUT THIS? IS THIS WHY HE WOULDN'T COME TO MEETINGS WITH ME?



HE NEEDS HELP. I SHOULDN'T LEAVE HIM



NICK?



I IMMEDIATELY DIALED 911



OH MY GOD, NICK!

HE WAS OVERDOSING

I PERFORMED RESCUE BREATHING
If someone is overdosing, call 911 and use Narcan if available.



I REMEMBER NICK USED TO KEEP NARCAN IN HIS BAG



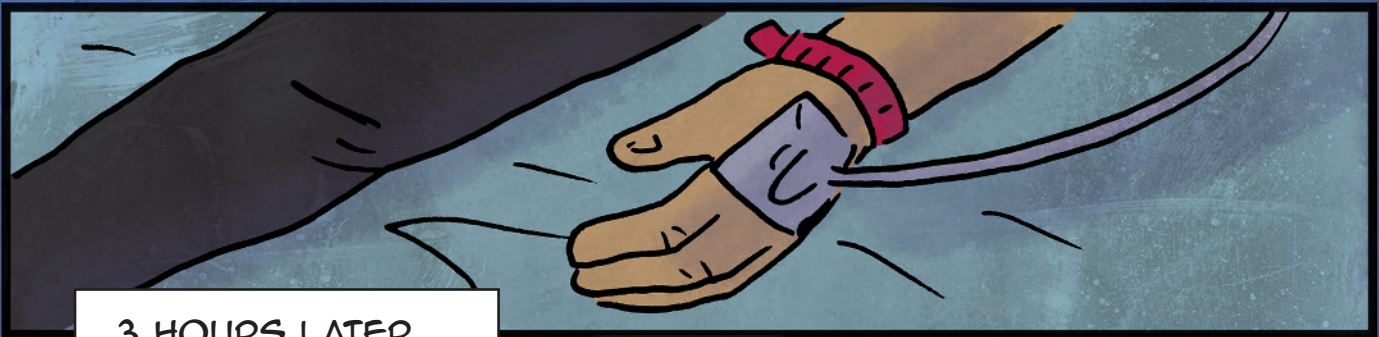
GURGLE
GASP...

I GOT IT, I PUT IT TOGETHER





COME ON, NICK.
STAY WITH ME.

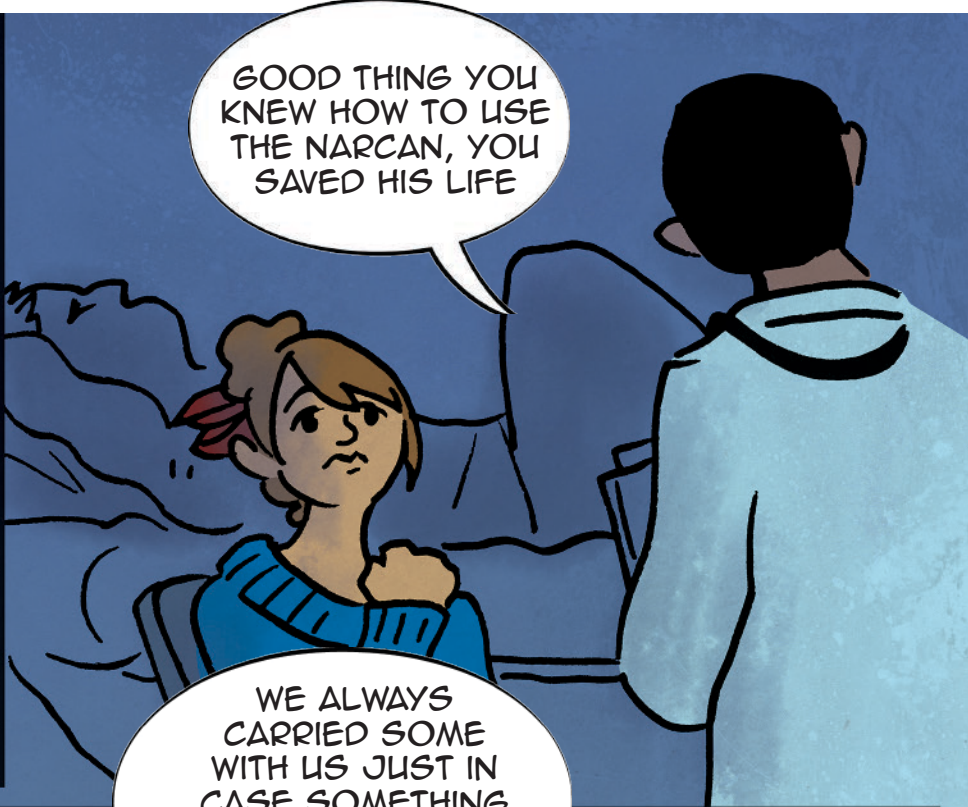


3 HOURS LATER...





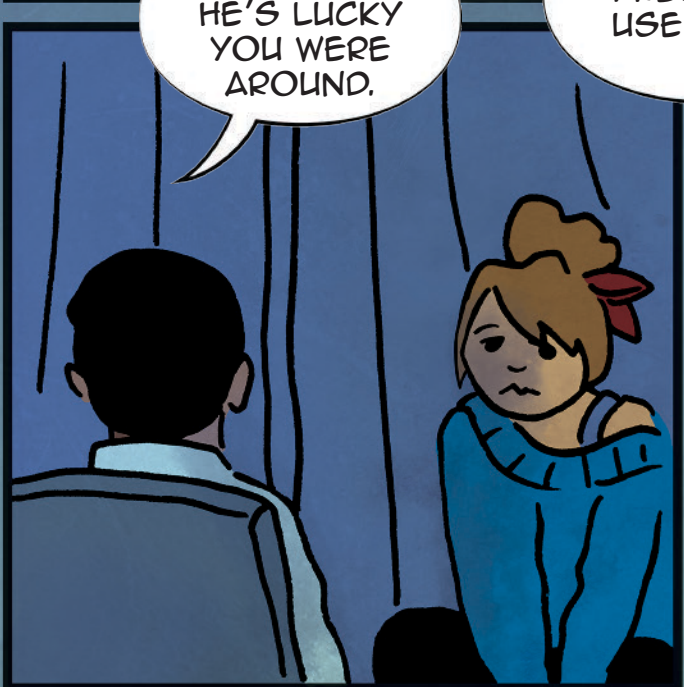
HI, YOU MUST BE KAT



GOOD THING YOU KNEW HOW TO USE THE NARCAN, YOU SAVED HIS LIFE



WE ALWAYS CARRIED SOME WITH US JUST IN CASE SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENED. I'M JUST GLAD HE'S OK



HE'LL BE FINE. HE'S LUCKY YOU WERE AROUND.

DOES NICK FREQUENTLY USE ALONE?



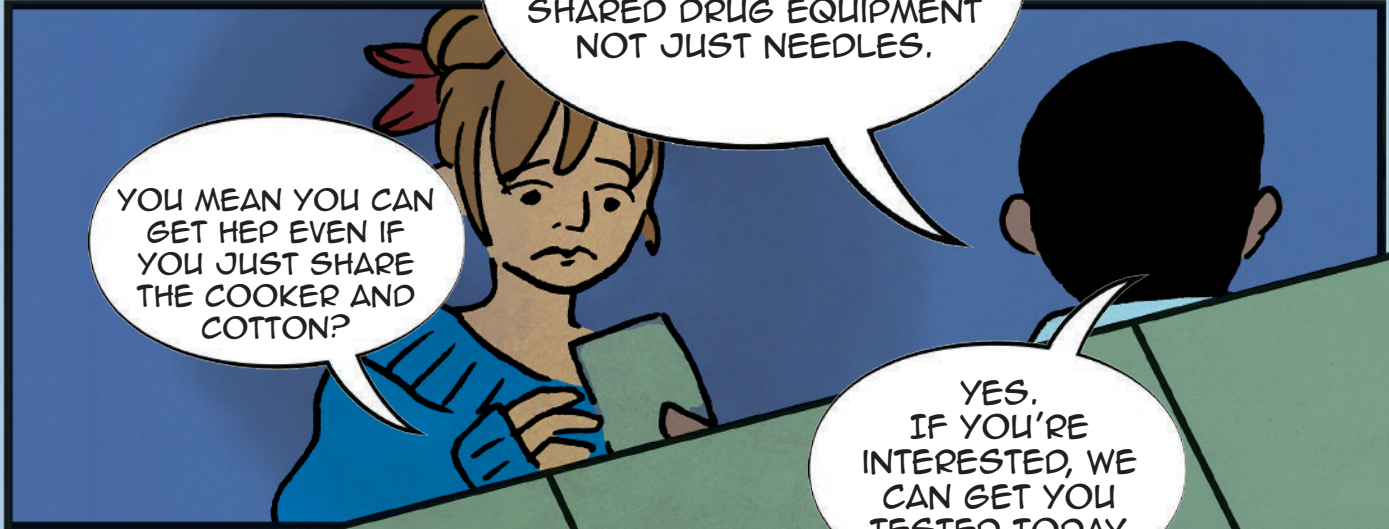
WE USED TO SHOOT UP TOGETHER, BUT I STOPPED 6 MONTHS AGO. I THOUGHT HE HAD, TOO.



I SEE. HAVE YOU BEEN TESTED FOR HEPATITIS C OR HIV?

NO, BUT EVEN WHEN I WAS USING, I WAS ALWAYS REALLY CAREFUL NEVER TO SHARE MY NEEDLES.

CLEAN NEEDLES ARE IMPORTANT, BUT ACTUALLY, HEPATITIS C CAN BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH ANY SHARED DRUG EQUIPMENT NOT JUST NEEDLES.



YOU MEAN YOU CAN GET HEP EVEN IF YOU JUST SHARE THE COOKER AND COTTON?

YES. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, WE CAN GET YOU TESTED TODAY.

Injection drug users are at a high risk of contracting hepatitis C, which can lead to severe liver damage and even death.
Hepatitis C can be transmitted by sharing ANY of “the works” – not just needles.
Hepatitis C is a durable virus and can survive for weeks in all drug equipment (e.g. cooker, cottons, water, etc.)
To avoid hepatitis C infection, do not share any drug equipment – washing/bleaching equipment may help reduce risk, but does not eliminate the possibility of infection.

Transmission

Hepatitis C (Hep C) is a bloodborne infection that attacks the liver causing it to swell. If left untreated, it can result in liver damage or liver cancer. Hep C is the leading reason for liver transplants in the United States.

Hep C is most commonly transmitted through sharing needles and equipment for injecting street drugs. But don't forget - Hep C can also be acquired any time blood or other body fluids containing blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected. This can include:

- Sharing needles or other equipment used to inject drugs
- Sharing equipment used to snort drugs
- Receiving a tattoo or piercing with an unsterilized needle or dye
- Sharing items like razors or toothbrushes
- Less commonly, Hepatitis C can be spread
 - From a mother to child at birth
 - Through sexual contact

REMEMBER: HEP C CAN'T BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH CASUAL CONTACT. THERE IS NO RISK FROM KISSING, TOUCHING, SHAKING HANDS, SNEEZING OR COUGHING.

Testing

Getting tested is the first step to ensuring your long term liver health. Even though visible symptoms may not appear for years, Hep C is constantly attacking your liver. It's important to catch the infection before it causes permanent damage.

Getting tested is as simple as going to your local healthcare provider or testing center. There are different options for testing that fit all lifestyle and time commitments. See the "Resources" section of this page to find options for getting tested.

Treatment

Hep C is curable! A small percentage of people who become infected with Hep C will clear the virus on their own, but most will need treatment to get rid of the virus.

There are a variety of treatment options available for Hep C, more than have existed in the past. These include treatments that no longer include injections. Talk to your healthcare provider about which option is best for you.

REMEMBER: EVEN IF THE VIRUS IS CLEARED FROM YOUR BODY WITH TREATMENT, YOU CAN GET IT AGAIN! SHARING DRUG EQUIPMENT AFTER TREATMENT WILL PUT YOU AT RISK FOR GETTING HEP C AGAIN.

If you are currently living with Hep C, here are some tips to help take care of your liver:

- Get regular check-ups from your provider
- Get vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B
- Limit or eliminate alcohol consumption
- Talk to your doctor before taking ANY over the counter medications
- Maintain a healthy and balanced diet

Resources

AHOPE –Free and confidential needle exchange and testing services for Hepatitis C, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV in Boston. Supported referrals to all forms of treatment are also available.

AHOPE services are available at the walk-in center at 774 Albany Street and through mobile van and outreach sites around Boston. For the AHOPE van schedule, please call **617-534-3976**. Visit their website at www.bphc.org/ahope

PAATHS – For questions about Addictions Services in Boston including:

- Detox
 - Substance Abuse Treatments
 - Recovery Support Services
 - Narcan (naloxone) information and training in Boston
- Call the PAATHS hotline at **855-494-4057** or visit www.bphc.org/paaths for more details.

Mayor's Health Line – Live in Boston and need health insurance or a primary care physician? Call the Mayor's Health Line at **617-534-5050** for confidential, multilingual information and referral service open Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm. Visit their website at www.bphc.org/mhl



Building a Healthy Boston | Mayor Martin J. Walsh
Produced by the Boston Public Health Commission

Infectious Disease Bureau | 617-534-5611