



Information About Hepatitis C

If you have been diagnosed with Hepatitis C, there are some important things you can do to take care of yourself before, during, and after treatment.

Hepatitis C is curable for most people if all the medication prescribed to treat the virus is taken.

How is Hepatitis C treated?

- You have been prescribed a type of medication called an “antiviral,” which is a tablet taken by mouth.
- It is important to take your medication exactly as prescribed **every day**, and to finish **all** the tablets during the **8 to 12 weeks** of treatment.
- Call your health care team if you are having trouble taking your medication, or if you miss a dose.

When will I know if I no longer have Hepatitis C?

- Once you have completed your treatment, you will be tested to see if you have cleared the virus.
- You will get tested again about 3 months after your last dose of medication.
- It is important to return and get tested to be sure you no longer have hepatitis C.

How do I keep my liver healthy?

Hepatitis C causes liver inflammation. The liver looks after nutrients for your body, filters the blood, and fights infections. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, it may not function properly.

The following can help to slow further damage to your liver and avoid health problems later:

- **Reduce alcohol intake (no alcohol is best).** Alcohol can damage the liver more. Ask if you need help to quit. Counselling, support groups, and sometimes medicines can help.
- **Get vaccinated** (if not already) against hepatitis A and hepatitis B. Check with your doctor.
- **If you smoke, consider quitting.**
- **Avoid taking drugs or herbal medicines.** These can make liver problems worse. Be sure your doctor knows what drugs you are taking. Do not take any new medicines, including over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, without checking first.
- **Make healthy choices.** Try to get regular exercise, eat healthy foods, and drink plenty of fluids (like water).

What can I do to avoid getting Hepatitis C again?

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. You can get hepatitis C again after you have finished treatment.

Avoid:

- Non-regulated tattoo parlours
- Sharing or reusing drug-injection equipment, needles, syringes, or any other items (such as pipes) used to prepare and use drugs

How can I prevent spreading Hepatitis C to others?

Hepatitis C is passed on by blood-to-blood contact. It is important to tell people you live with about your illness as soon as possible.

- It may be important for your family/partner to get tested for hepatitis C.
- Hepatitis C can be spread through sexual contact. It is important to talk with your health care team about your risk.
- It is better if you don't share personal items that may involve blood exposure. For example: razors, nail clippers, toothbrushes, and glucose monitors.

What can I do to cope with Hepatitis C?

You might feel uncertain about the future, have questions about what your diagnosis means for you, or wonder what will happen next. If you are feeling worried or sad and want to talk with someone, let your health care team know.

ONLINE RESOURCES

More information and support available in Canada (English and French):

Liver Canada: Hepatitis C
<https://liver.ca/hepatitis-c/>



CATIE: Canada's source for HIV and hepatitis C information
<https://www.catie.ca/>

Sources:

- 1) Maness DL, Riley E, Studebaker G. Hepatitis C: diagnosis and management. *Am Fam Physician*. 2021;104:626-35.
- 2) CATIE. *Hepatitis C treatment, care and support*. <https://www.catie.ca/>.

