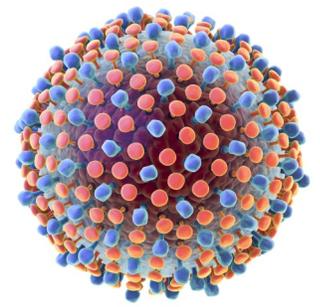


HEPATITIS C



Hepatitis C is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV is spread when blood from a person with HCV enters the blood of someone who is not infected. Acute hepatitis C refers to the first several months after someone is infected. Most people who have HCV develop a chronic, lifelong, infection. Chronic hepatitis C can cause serious health problems including liver disease, cirrhosis, and liver cancer—but can be cured with proper treatment.



How is it spread?

The hepatitis C virus is spread by contact with blood of a person with HCV through:

- ▶ Sharing needles, syringes, or other equipment to inject drugs.
- ▶ Blood transfusions or organ transplants prior to 1992.
- ▶ Being born to a mother with HCV.
- ▶ Needle stick injuries in health care settings.
- ▶ Sharing razors or toothbrushes with a person who has HCV.
- ▶ Sexual contact with a person who has HCV.
- ▶ Tattoos and body piercings in unlicensed facilities using nonsterile instruments.



What are the signs and symptoms?

Most people with HCV will not have symptoms, but they can still spread the virus.

With early (acute) HCV infection, symptoms may start two to six months after becoming infected. Symptoms can include:

- ▶ Fever
- ▶ Tiredness
- ▶ Not wanting to eat
- ▶ Upset stomach
- ▶ Throwing up
- ▶ Stomach pain
- ▶ Dark colored urine (pee)
- ▶ Grey or clay colored stool (poop)
- ▶ Joint pain
- ▶ Yellow color in skin or eyes





Who should get tested?

Testing is the only way to know if you have HCV. Get tested if you:

- ▶ Were born between 1945 and 1965.
- ▶ Received donated blood or organs before 1992.
- ▶ Ever injected drugs, even if only one time.
- ▶ Were born to a mother with hepatitis C.
- ▶ Have medical conditions like liver disease or HIV/AIDS.
- ▶ Have been exposed to blood from a person with hepatitis C .
- ▶ Are a chronic hemodialysis patient.



What are the treatment options?

- ▶ In order to treat hepatitis C it is important to see a doctor. There are pills that can now cure most people with HCV.
- ▶ Avoid alcohol, and check with a doctor before taking any prescription pills, supplements, or over-the-counter medications.
- ▶ To protect the liver from other forms of viral hepatitis, get vaccinated against hepatitis A and hepatitis B.



How can it be prevented?

Currently there is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C, but there are ways to reduce the risk of becoming infected!

- ▶ Avoid sharing or reusing needles, syringes, or any other equipment to prepare and inject drugs, steroids, hormones, or anything else.
- ▶ Do not use personal items that may have come into contact with the blood of a person with HCV, such as razors, nail clippers, toothbrushes, or glucose monitors.
- ▶ Only get tattoos or body piercings from licensed facilities.

