

# Hepatitis C

## What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is caused by a virus that hurts the liver. A virus is a germ that causes sickness.

## How could I get Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is spread by contact with an infected person's blood. So you can get Hepatitis C by:

- Getting pricked with a needle that has infected blood on it (hospital workers can get Hepatitis C this way)
- Having sex with an infected person without using a condom
- Being born to a mother with Hepatitis C
- Getting a tattoo or body piercing with dirty tools
- Sharing drug needles

## You can NOT get Hepatitis C by:

- Shaking hands with an infected person
- Hugging an infected person
- Kissing an infected person
- Sitting next to an infected person
- Touching toilet seats or doorknobs

## Could I get Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion?

Before 1992, doctors could not check blood for Hepatitis C, and some people received infected blood. If you had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992, as your doctor to test you for Hepatitis C. All blood is tested now so you can no longer get Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion.

## What are the symptoms of Hepatitis C infection?

Many people with Hepatitis C do not have any symptoms. However, some people with Hepatitis C feel like they have the stomach flu. Some people have:

- Dark yellow urine
- Light colored stools or BMs
- Yellowish eyes and skin

If you have symptoms or think you might have Hepatitis C, talk with your doctor.

## What are the tests for Hepatitis C?

There is a blood test for Hepatitis C. If this test show that you have the infection, the doctor will order other blood tests to find out how much of the virus is in your blood stream and what type of Hepatitis C virus you are carrying.

## How is Hepatitis C treated?

Hepatitis C is treated with shots of a special medicine called interferon.

## How can I protect myself from hepatitis C?

- Wear gloves if you have to touch anyone's blood
- Always use a condom when you have sex
- Don't use an infected person's toothbrush, razor, or anything else that could have blood on it.
- If you get a tattoo or body piercing, make sure it is done with clean tools.
- If you inject drugs, use your own needles. Do not share needles with anyone.
- If you have Hepatitis C, do not donate your blood or plasma.

**If you have any questions, ask your doctor. Here are some places to find out more about Hepatitis C.**

**American Liver Foundation**  
24-hour hotline (7 days a week)  
1-800-465-4837 or 1-888-443-7222  
[www.hepfi.org](http://www.hepfi.org)

**Hepatitis Foundation International**  
1-800-891-0707  
[www.liverfoundation.org](http://www.liverfoundation.org)

TCRHCC 07/05

**HEP-DPC HEPATITIS – DISEASE PROCESS HEPATITIS C**  
**HEP-TE – HEPATITIS – TESTS**  
**HEP-P – HEPATITIS - PREVENTION**