

# Hepatitis C

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## What is it?

- Hepatitis C is an infection of the liver that is caused by a virus.
- The virus is found in the blood of persons who are infected with the disease.
- Symptoms include:
  - tiredness
  - nausea
  - abdominal pain
  - lighter stools
  - darker urine
  - jaundice – yellowing of the skin and eyes
- Most people who are infected with Hepatitis C do not get sick and have no symptoms.

## How is it spread?

Hepatitis C is spread from contact with the body fluids of an infected person.

It can be spread by:

- sharing needles, straws, pipes, spoons and other drug-related equipment.
- getting a tattoo, body piercing or acupuncture when unsterilized equipment or poor technique is used.
- being born to a mother with Hepatitis C.
- getting pierced by a needle or sharp object that has infected blood on it.
- sharing personal household items such as a razor or toothbrush with an infected person.
- having a sexual partner who is a Hepatitis C carrier.
- having many sexual partners.

## Is there treatment for it?

- There are a few medications available for treatment. Talk with your doctor regarding what treatment is the best for you.

## How to take care of your liver if you have Hepatitis C

- See your doctor regularly.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Tell your doctor about all medications you are taking, even over-the-counter and herbal medicines.

## What can be done to prevent the spread of it?

- There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C. Persons at risk for Hepatitis C may also be at risk for infection with Hepatitis B. The vaccine for Hepatitis B is recommended.
- Avoid contact with other people's blood and body fluids.
- Practice safer sex. Use a condom.
- Do not share needles, syringes, or other needle equipment.
- Have only a professional do your tattoo, or body and ear piercing. Never share any equipment used for tattoo.
- Do not share personal care items such as razors, dental floss or toothbrushes.

**If you have Hepatitis C do not donate  
your blood, body organs, other tissues or sperm.**

## For more information

Go to the Public Health Agency of Canada website:

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hcai-iamss/bbp-pts/hepatitis/hep\\_c-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hcai-iamss/bbp-pts/hepatitis/hep_c-eng.php)

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.  
Clean your hands.**

