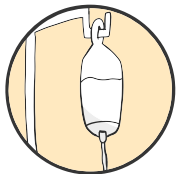


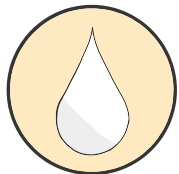
WHO COULD BE MOST AT RISK?

1975

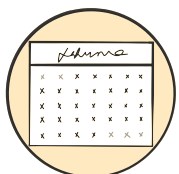
ANYONE BORN BETWEEN 1945 - 1975. 3 in 4 Canadians with HCV were born within this time period.



ANYONE WHO HAD A BLOOD TRANSFUSION OR ORGAN TRANSPLANT BEFORE 1990.



ANYONE WHO HAS COME INTO CONTACT WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S BLOOD. (Through shared medical equipment, unprotected sex, unsterilized tattoos or piercings, or shared drug equipment).



ANYONE WHO HASN'T BEEN TESTED RECENTLY. HCV can be symptomless for 20-30 years, while silently causing damage to the liver. The only way to be sure of your status is to get tested regularly.

NO RISK ACTIVITIES:

- Talking, touching, and shaking hands
- Hugging and kissing
- Using public bathrooms and swimming pools
- Tattooing or piercing with new and sterilized equipment
- Fantasizing or masturbating to yourself
- Coughing or sneezing
- Bites from mosquitos, bedbugs, or other insects and animals
- Using ceremonial pipes or attending sweats

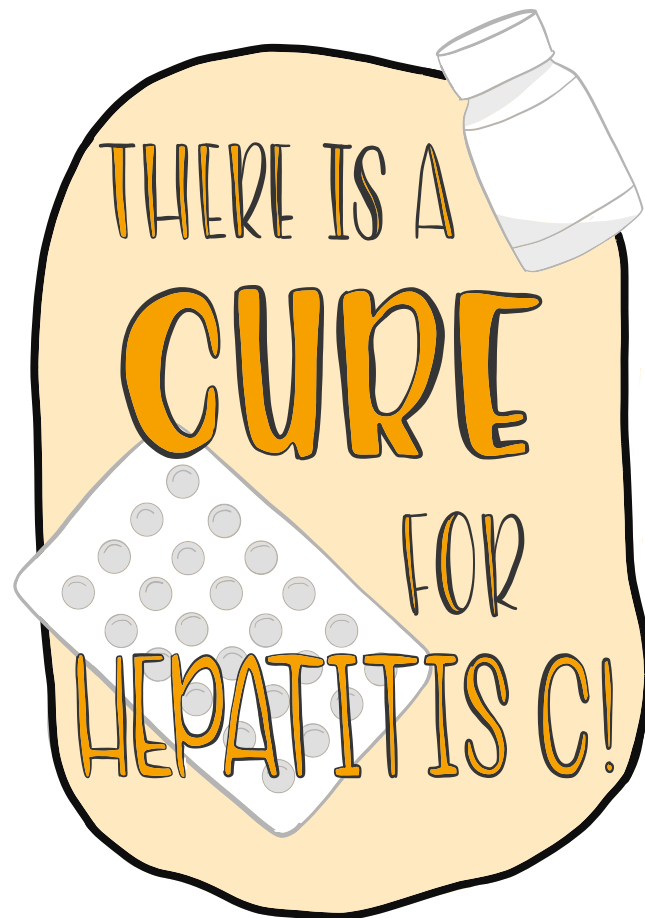
IF HCV IS UNTREATED, IT CAN SILENTLY CAUSE LIVER DAMAGE, LIVER CANCER & LIVER FAILURE.

Many people live with HCV for decades without experiencing symptoms. The only way to be sure is to get tested!

To get tested, please see your local health clinic.

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For More Information:
www.aidssaskatoon.ca
1-800-667-6876



WHAT IS

HEPATITIS C?

- Hepatitis C is an infection that targets the liver.
- If left untreated, hepatitis C can cause different types of liver damage, such as:
 - LIVER INFLAMMATION
 - LIVER FIBROSIS: the formation of scar tissue in the liver that replaces healthy tissue
 - LIVER CIRRHOSIS: a large amount of severe, irreversible scar tissue that replaces healthy tissue
 - LIVER CANCER
- The more liver damage occurs, the less healthy tissue remains to perform the functions of the liver.

HOW IS HEPATITIS C TRANSMITTED? BLOOD

- HCV is transmitted when infected blood gets into someone else's bloodstream
- To protect yourself, always clean up blood and cover wounds
- Avoid sharing toothbrushes, razors, manicure and pedicure equipment

DRUG EQUIPMENT

- Use a new needle every time you inject drugs
- Use personal, unshared pipes, straws, cookers, filters, water, and ties
- Shared drug equipment could be contaminated with infected blood

UNPROTECTED SEX

- Use a condom every time you have vaginal or anal sex
- Use a condom or dental dam every time you have oral sex
- Use a new condom for each sex act and each partner

TESTING

There are two tests for Hepatitis C:

1. The Antibody Test determines whether you have ever been exposed to HCV.
 - If this test comes back negative, HCV has never entered your body.
 - If this test comes back positive, it means you have been exposed in the past, and you will need a second test to determine if your exposure resulted in infection.
2. The RNA Test determines whether you are HCV positive by assessing your viral load.

If you think something risky happened, you need to wait three months after the exposure before getting tested. It will take the body three months to test positive for HCV. If you get tested earlier, the results may not be accurate.



TREATMENT

20-25 percent of people with HCV can cure themselves without medication. However, they are not immune, and with each new exposure they are at risk to be infected again. For those who need it, a number of effective medications are available. There are 6 types of HCV, and each type requires different medication. Oral medication is now available for every genotype, and medication has vastly improved in recent years.

WHO IS COVERED?

The cost of treatment may be covered if you:

- Have an HIV co-infection
- Have a Hepatitis B co-infection
- Have diabetes, and you are currently taking diabetes medication
- Have had an organ transplant
- Have fatty liver disease
- Have an extra-hepatic manifestation (health problems caused by HCV that affect body parts other than the liver, i.e. the brain, skin, kidneys)
- Are a woman of child-bearing age, and you are trying to get pregnant

Most people will be covered through provincial medical coverage or through Non-Insured Health Benefits.

WHAT IF I TEST POSITIVE?

- Talk to your healthcare provider about treatment. With proper treatment, you can stay healthy and improve your quality of life.
- Practice safe sex and drug use to protect loved ones and peers.
- Join a support group to find like-minded others and to share your experiences in a safe space.

THE LIVER:

The liver performs more than 500 functions in the body, including:

- Helping blood clot
- Breaking down old or damaged blood cells
- Controlling how energy is used
- Helping the body get rid of waste products

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Many people have no symptoms at all for 20-30 years
- Some people who Hepatitis C develop liver damage before noticing any symptoms
- Those who do experience symptoms often feel fatigue, fever, muscle aches, joint aches, nausea, stomach pains, or loss of appetite.