UT Health San Antonio

English

Español

CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

UT Health San Antonio

ReACH Center
Center for Research to Advance Community Health

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Welcome

Now you know you have Hepatitis C.
But what does that mean for your health?

We're here to help you find out.

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What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a liver infection. HCV infection causes few symptoms for many years.

Most people with HCV have no idea that they have it.

It is important to know, because it can seriously hurt your liver.

There is a cure for HCV and most people can be cured.

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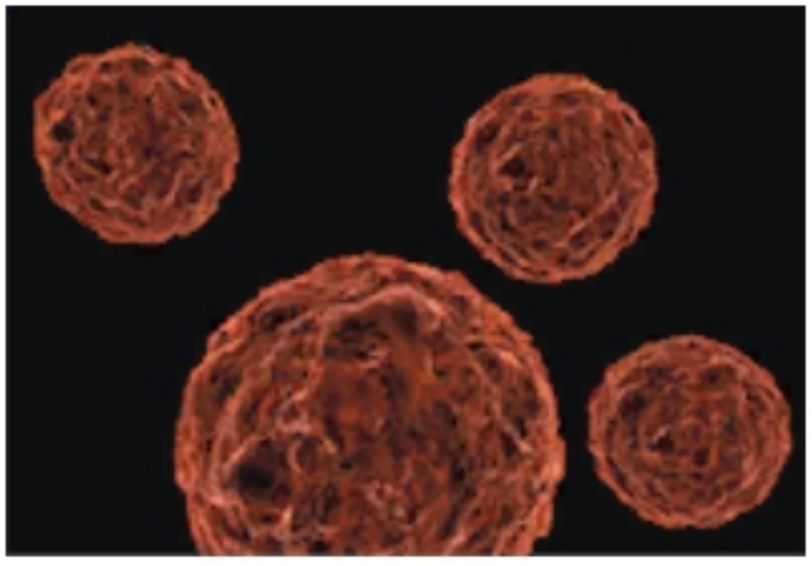
What is Hepatitis?

Your liver is an important organ located in the upper right part of your abdomen.

Your liver helps your body use the food you eat.

It filters and helps your blood clot.

It also fights infections.



What causes Hepatitis?

Hepatitis is often caused by an infection with a virus.

There are several different kinds of Hepatitis viruses: A, B, and C.

Hepatitis C is one of the most common of these viruses that infect and damage the liver.

The virus is tiny and can only be seen with a special microscope.

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QUICK QUESTION

What part of your body can Hepatitis hurt?

Stomach

Bones

Liver

Eyes

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QUICK QUESTION

What part of your body can Hepatitis hurt?

That's Correct!

Hepatitis C hurts your liver.

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Who has Hepatitis C?

About 5 million people in the U.S. have Hepatitis C. infection

About half the people who are infected do not even know it.

Most of these people are baby boomers born from 1945 through 1965

Experts say that all “baby boomers” should be tested for Hepatitis C.

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How do you get Hepatitis C?

You can get Hepatitis C from contact with blood from another person with Hepatitis C.

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How do you get Hepatitis C?

You can get Hepatitis C from:

Injecting or snorting drugs.

Getting tattoos using dirty needles.

Having a blood transfusion before 1992.

Having rough or anal sex.

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What does not spread Hepatitis C?

You CANNOT get Hepatitis C from:

Food, Saliva, Kissing, Hugging

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QUICK QUESTION

What is one of the ways you can get Hepatitis C?

- Hugging someone with HCV
- Getting a blood transfusion today
- Using a needle that was used by someone with HCV
- Eating food that was made by someone with HCV

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QUICK QUESTION

What is one of the ways you can get Hepatitis C?

That's Correct!

Needles with blood on them from an infected person can give you Hepatitis C.

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How do you know you have Hepatitis C?

There are two common blood tests for Hepatitis C:

- HCV test for antibodies that fight the infection

- HCV viral load test that looks for the virus in the blood

If the first test is positive, it shows you have had the infection sometime in your life. If the second test is positive, it shows you still have the infection.

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How do you know when you have Hepatitis C?

Most people infected with Hepatitis C do not know it.

Some people feel like they have the flu when they first get it.

After about 20 years, HCV can start to make you sick.

The most common symptom that people get is feeling very tired.

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How can Hepatitis C affect your liver?

Over time, Hepatitis C can scar your liver.
When the liver is scarred a lot, it is called fibrosis.

Over time, these scars (fibrosis) can turn into nodules and the liver shrinks. That is called cirrhosis.

In people with cirrhosis, the liver can stop working.

Hepatitis C is also the most common cause of liver cancer.

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QUICK QUESTION

How do you know for sure if you have Hepatitis C?

Two blood tests to confirm the diagnosis

You can tell from a chest x-ray

You can never be sure

Doctor can tell by looking at you

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QUICK QUESTION

How do you know for sure if you have Hepatitis C?

That's Correct!

Two blood tests are needed to confirm that you currently have Hepatitis C.

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How can I protect my liver?

Cut out alcohol.

Beer, wine, hard liquor, or other alcohol can hurt your liver even more.

Tell your doctor or health care provider to vaccinate you against other viruses that can cause Hepatitis (A & B). There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C!

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How can I protect my liver?

Be sure to check that your medications will not hurt your liver.

Check pills that you may buy yourself like Tylenol, Advil, Ibuprofen, or other herbal pills they may also hurt your liver.

Fat can also hurt your liver, you need to eat healthy.

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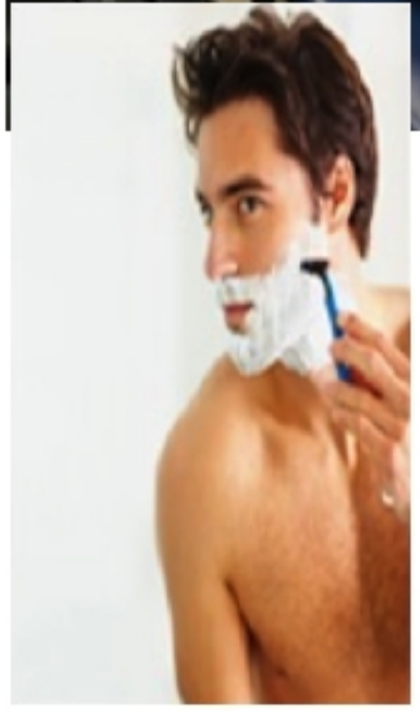

How do I protect my family and others from getting Hepatitis C?

If you have Hepatitis C, it is in your blood. So don't:

- Donate blood

- Share things that could have your blood on them with others (toothbrushes, razors, clippers)

- Let them touch your blood if you have a cut

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Is there a cure?

Yes! Your doctor can give you medication that can cure Hepatitis C.

For most people, the virus goes away for good.

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A few questions for you, to help you protect your liver:

Are you a:

Man

Woman

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UT Health San Antonio

A few questions for you, to help you protect your liver:

How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

- Never
- Monthly or less
- 2-4 times a month
- 2-3 times a week
- 4 or more times a week

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Protect your liver—don't drink alcohol.

You may drink more than is healthy for you liver. It can be hard to stop drinking on your own.
We would like to help you!

Even occasional drinks can hurt your liver when you have HCV. We want to keep you from hurting your liver even more.

Talk to your doctor or health care provider about ways to help you to stop drinking.

A few questions for you...

Have you used any of these drugs in the past?

(pot, cocaine, heroin, uppers, downers, meth, hallucinogens, or inhalants)

Yes

No

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Beware

Sharing needles or sharing straws can be risky for other people.

Using drugs can also prevent you from getting treated.

Your doctor or health care provider can help you manage your drug use.

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A few questions for you, to help you protect your partners, friends, and family from HCV.

Do you have sex with:

Women

Men

Both

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Be safe about sex!

Let your partner know that you have Hepatitis C so that he or she can be tested too.

It is best to be sure, even though most of the time your partner will test negative

To protect your partner, you should always wear a condom when having anal sex or any type of sex where bleeding may occur.

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Reasons why you want to keep getting care for HCV:

1. You can learn about what has happened to your body.

2. You can learn about ways you can get treated.

3. You can get checked for other diseases caused by Hepatitis C.

4. You can prevent liver damage.

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Added benefits from getting treated:

- Help keep your liver as healthy as possible
- Prevent liver cancer or find it early
- Feel better!

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Huge benefits from getting treatment:

- You can get your Hepatitis C infection cured.
- Most people are cured in only 12 weeks
- Feel better
- Live longer!

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Any questions?

Remember, we are here to help you as part of your team!

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Rating

How useful was this to help you understand Hepatitis C?

Not useful at all		Neutral		Very useful
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5

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Acknowledgements

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