

## Getting tested

Hep C testing involves a quick blood test. Some clinics have rapid tests that give you your results in 20 minutes. If the test is positive, you will be asked to take another test called an RNA test to determine your best treatment options.

## Hep C treatment

Treatment for hep C usually consists of antiviral medications to reduce the amount of virus in your body. The goal of treatment is to have no hep C virus detected in your body at least 12 weeks after you complete treatment.

Your provider will likely recommend that during treatment you avoid drinking alcohol and taking any medicines that may harm your liver.

## Can hep C be cured?

**Yes** – hep C can be treated and even cured at times. To benefit from hep C medicines, individuals must first know if they have hep C. And the only way to know if you have hep C is by getting tested.

## Pregnancy and hep C

It is possible to pass on hep C to your infant during pregnancy and delivery. That's why all pregnant people should be tested for hep C. If you are pregnant and you test positive for hep C, your health provider will likely give you a blood test to determine the best options for you and your baby.

## Vaccinations

Although there is no vaccine for hep C, your doctor will likely recommend that you get vaccinated against the hepatitis A and B viruses. These are separate viruses that can also cause liver damage and complications for those that have chronic hep C.

**Testing is easy and treatment is quick! For peace of mind, talk with your provider or local Tribal health facility for more information about STI testing and treatment resources near you.**



# HEP C

*Hepatitis C is a curable virus.*



Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, August 7). Hepatitis C questions and answers for Health Professionals. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/hcvfaq.htm#section1>; Hemodialysis. National Kidney Foundation. (2022, November 16). Retrieved March 8, 2023, from <https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/hemodialysis#how-does-hemodialysis-work>; Parenthood, P. (n.d.). What is hepatitis B & how do you get it? Planned Parenthood. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/stds-hiv-safer-sex/hepatitis-b>

## What is hep C?

Hepatitis C - also called hep C or HCV - is a virus that causes liver disease. Hep C can cause a mild illness that only lasts a few weeks or months, or it can cause a serious chronic condition that lasts a lifetime.

## How does hep C spread?

The hep C virus is spread through blood. So, people often get infected with hep C by sharing injection supplies, like needles or cookers, or from unclean needles during tattooing or piercing. Hep C can also be spread to babies during pregnancy and birth.

## Hep C risk

You are at increased risk for hep C if you:

- Are HIV+
- Have ever injected drugs
- Received hemodialysis – a procedure used to clean a person's blood when their kidneys cannot clean it for them
- Received a transfusion or organ transplant prior to 1987
- Were born to a person with hep C
- Are a health care, emergency medical, or public safety personnel who has been exposed to hep C (e.g., through a needle stick or sharps exposure)

## Hep C symptoms

Many people with hep C don't have any symptoms. However, if you do have symptoms they might include:

- Tiredness
- Pain in your belly
- Poor appetite
- Jaundice (yellow-colored eyes or skin)
- Clay-colored poop
- Dark pee
- Fever
- Joint pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting

## Hep C symptoms continued

For some people, hep C will go away without treatment after about 6 months. However, for the majority of people, if hep C is left untreated, it will turn into a lifelong (chronic) condition.

Chronic hep C rarely has symptoms. Most people find out they have hep C when they're diagnosed with advanced liver disease. That's why it is so important to get tested for hep C as a part of your regular STI testing – even if you feel totally normal and healthy.

## Contact Us

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