

# Hepatitis C Virus: What You Should Know

## Hepatitis C and the Liver

Hepatitis C is a virus that attacks the liver

The liver acts as the body's filter by removing toxins (harmful substances) from anything you eat, drink, inhale, inject, or put into your body

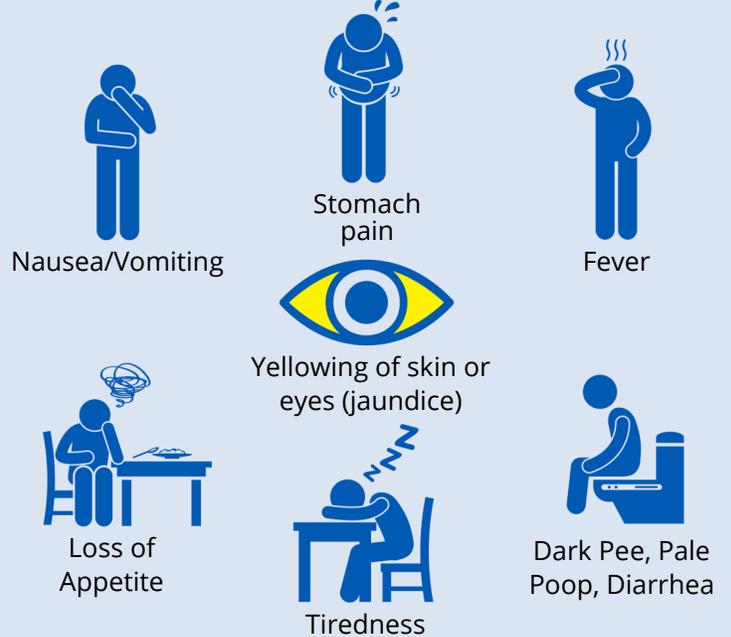
The liver also helps with digestion and blood clotting

You cannot live without your liver



## Symptoms

Many people have no symptoms, but you may have one or more of the following:



## Acute and Chronic Hepatitis C

### Acute

Lasts 6 months or less

Only 15-25% of people with hepatitis C have symptoms

Body may clear the virus without treatment

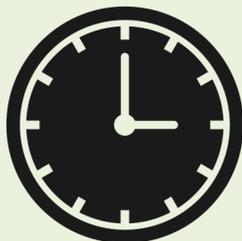
If you cleared the virus on your own you are not protected from getting hepatitis C again

### Chronic

Lifelong condition

75-85% of people with hepatitis C experience chronic hepatitis C

If left untreated, serious complications such as cirrhosis (scarring of liver), liver cancer, and even death can occur



## Understanding Test Results

### Antibody

Determines if you have ever been exposed to hepatitis C virus

Does not protect you from getting hepatitis C in the future

Once you have been diagnosed with hepatitis C, your antibody test will remain reactive (positive) for the rest of your life, even if treated

### RNA (Confirmatory)

Determines if you currently have the hepatitis C virus in your body

If detected (positive), then you have the hepatitis C virus in your body and can spread the virus to others

If not detected (negative), then you do not have the virus in your body and cannot spread it to others

After successful treatment, the virus is gone and no longer found in your blood

### Types of Tests



Fingerstick



Blood Draw

### Type of Test



Blood Draw

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## Preventing the Spread of Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C virus is spread when the blood of someone with hepatitis C mixes with tiny, invisible amounts of blood from someone without hepatitis C

Hepatitis C can also be passed from mother to baby during pregnancy and childbirth

Do **not** share personal items that may come in contact with blood



Diabetic Equipment



Nail Clippers



Toothbrushes

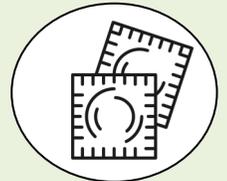


Razors

To protect your loved ones



Cover Wounds



Use Condoms during Sex

Do **not** share injection or inhalation products



Medications or Injected Drugs



Nasal Sprays or Snorting Straws

Do **not** get tattoos or piercings except at a licensed facility



Tattoos



Piercings



Clean Surfaces with Bleach Solution

## Get Tested, Treatment Cures

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend all adults be tested for hepatitis C

Call your local health department to schedule your test



<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/localdepartments.html>

### Helpful Reminders

Keep all your appointments, including those after completing treatment

Take medications as prescribed and follow your provider's instructions

## Treatment

### Facts

Liver damage can happen over months to years so early treatment is best

Hepatitis C treatment can be as simple as taking one pill daily for 2 to 3 months

Most people notice few to no side effects from treatment medications

Over 90% of people treated are cured

### What Does Being Cured Mean?

Hepatitis C virus is no longer found in your blood

You will not be able to spread hepatitis C virus to others

You can get hepatitis C again if exposed, so protect yourself from coming into contact with anyone else's blood

