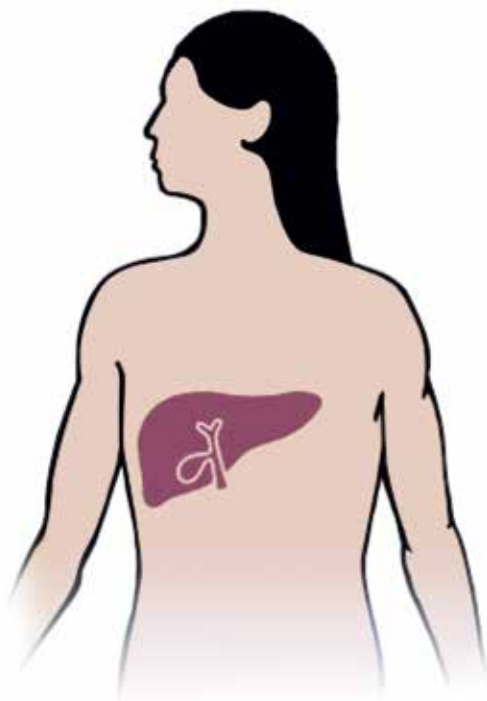
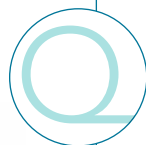


What is hepatitis C?



Hepatitis C is a virus that can cause damage to the liver.

How is Hepatitis C passed?



The hepatitis C virus is passed when there is **blood-to-blood** contact between someone with hepatitis C and a person without the virus.

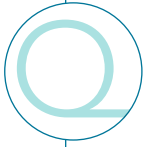
Hepatitis C is often passed by:

- sharing injection equipment such as needles and syringes
- sharing drug snorting equipment such as straws
- sharing pipes (crack, heroin, meth, etc.)

Hepatitis C can sometimes be passed by:



- piercing & tattooing
- sharing things like toothbrushes, razors, or nail files
- unprotected sex (e.g., if there is blood like in rough sex)
- accidentally being poked with a used needle
- a mother passing it to her newborn infant



Are there symptoms from hepatitis C?



At first, most people will have no or only a few symptoms, but...

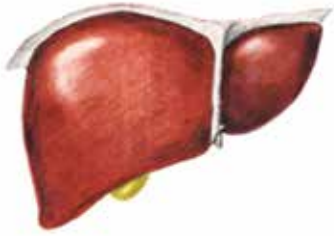
**...over time some
develop symptoms
such as:**



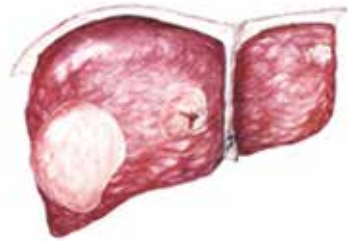
- feeling tired
- muscle pain
- joint pain
- headaches
- itchy skin
- pain in stomach area
- depression
- anxiety
- "brain fog"
- nausea



Is hepatitis C a death sentence?



Healthy Liver



Unhealthy Liver

No.



Most people who get hepatitis C do not die from it. But, over a long period of time, some will develop:

- cirrhosis (the liver gets scarred and does not work properly)
- liver cancer

Do people with hepatitis C need to see a health care provider even if they feel fine?

ESTHER AGLUKARK-POWELL RN
Role Model



Yes.



Every 6 to 12 months to monitor the liver! Even if a person feels well and has no symptoms, hepatitis C can still be damaging their liver.



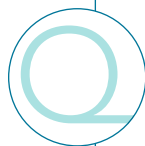
When do providers check how much virus is in a person's blood?



Health care providers will do this blood test when they need to:

- diagnose a person with hepatitis C
- check if treatment is working

Are there tests for liver damage?



Yes.



Your health care providers may do a physical exam and recommend blood or other tests to check for liver damage.



Can hepatitis C be cured?



Yes!



Current treatment medications
can cure about 70% of those treated*
Future treatments could cure more than
90% of those treated.

* Rates differ if you have HIV.

Can people who are using substances get treatment?



Yes!



They should ask for health care providers who have experience giving hepatitis C treatment to people who use substances (e.g. injection drugs, alcohol, methadone).

Frequently Asked Questions About Hepatitis C

12



These providers will work with the person to discuss and develop a plan to help them fit treatment into their life.

Can people who have hepatitis C and other diseases like HIV or diabetes get hepatitis C treatment?



Yes!



It's important to discuss all your health issues with your health care provider.

Are there side effects from hepatitis C treatment?

Q



Yes!

A

Symptoms vary, but may include:

- flu-like symptoms
- difficulty sleeping
- extreme tiredness

It is important to talk with your health care provider about how to manage treatment side effects.

Treatment can take several months.



Most people who get treatment will need emotional, spiritual and physical support during treatment. Support could be from health care and other providers, family, friends, elders and peers.



This resource was adapted from a resource created by the Attendance for Hepatitis C Care Project. It would not have been possible without the valuable contributions from individuals affected by hepatitis C, service providers and representatives from First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations across Canada.

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The Inuit adaptation was completed by the Canadian Inuit HIV/AIDS Network (CIHAN) and the project advisory committee.

For more information, visit www.pauktuutit.ca or www.bccdc.ca and type "Attendance Project" in the search box.

Email – info@pauktuutit.ca

An aerial photograph of a large, irregular ice floe floating in dark, choppy water. The ice is white on top and has a striking turquoise or cyan hue on its submerged edges and surface. The water is dark, with some ripples and small ice fragments scattered around the main floe.

520 – 1 Nicholas Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7
Tel: 613-238-3977
Fax: 613-238-1787

www.pauktuutit.ca