

He  C  
at a  
Glance

## I. About this guide...

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This guide provides a quick reference to important information about Hep C. It answers some basic questions about Hep C. It is easy to understand and can be used by both healthcare workers and people who are affected by Hep C.

Please note that this guide contains general information about Hep C. It should not be considered all-inclusive. For more detailed information about Hep C, please refer to the references that have been provided.

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Thank you to the nurses working in the Viral Hepatitis clinics of the Ottawa Hospital and to the members of the Hep C support group at the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre for their contributions to this initiative. A special thanks goes out to Marielle at Oasis. Finally, thank you to Glenn at Jack Of All Trades Design.

Feel free to reproduce any or all of this guide. It is also available in PDF format on the Sandy Hill Community Centre Web site: [www.sandyhillchc.on.ca](http://www.sandyhillchc.on.ca).



**“It isn’t the end of the world, so get to know everything you can about it before you get too upset. Information is power which leads to recovery and cure.”**

**Andy (cleared Hep C with drug treatment)**

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# 1. How is Hep C passed on?

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You can get Hep C when your blood comes in contact with blood that is infected with Hep C.

Here are the ways that people can catch Hep C:

- Blood transfusion with Hep C-infected blood
- Transplant of an organ, graft or tissue from a Hep C-infected donor
- Vaccination with a Hep C-infected needle
- Surgery with Hep C-infected equipment
- Healthcare worker injured by Hep C-infected needle stick or sharps
- Intravenous drug use (sharing Hep C-infected needles, water or cookers)
- Injecting steroids (sharing Hep C-infected needles)
- Snorting drugs (sharing Hep C-infected straws etc.)
- Sharing crack pipes with someone who is Hep C-infected and has bleeding lips and your lips are also bleeding
- Acupuncture, piercing, or tattooing with Hep C-infected equipment
- Sharing Hep C-infected toothbrushes, razors or nail clippers
- Fighting with someone who has Hep C, if there is blood-to-blood contact
- Sexual contact with someone who has Hep C (about 5 in 100)
- Babies born to mothers who have Hep C (about 5-10 in 100)
- Sometimes we can't figure out how someone caught the Hep C virus

## **The following situations may put people at risk for Hep C:**

- People with kidney problems who have had their blood filtered through long-term hemodialysis
- Sexual partners of intravenous drug users
- Sex-trade workers
- People with many sexual partners
- People who have spent time in prison
- People from countries where there is a lot of Hep C

## **How is Hep C NOT spread?**


- Casual contact at work, school, church, public gatherings or sports activities
- Contact with saliva (kissing), vomit, urine or feces
- Sharing cutlery, dishes or drinking glasses
- Swimming in a pool with treated water
- Insect bites

## **Hep C is spread through blood-to-blood contact only.**

If a body fluid (saliva, vomit, urine, semen) contains visible amounts of blood, it is possible to get Hep C from the blood in the fluids – but only if the blood comes in contact with your blood.

## Hep C and sex:

- The presence of other sexually transmitted infections (ex. herpes, warts) increases the chances of passing on Hep C
- Always wear a condom if you have a number of sexual partners
- If you are in a long-term relationship, the chances of passing on Hep C are extremely low – it is up to you and your partner to decide whether or not you want to use condoms
- Avoid having sexual relations with a woman when she has her period



**“People get Hep C in many different ways. It doesn’t matter *how* you got it - try not to feel guilty and focus on being good to yourself and staying healthy.”**

**Mona (Registered Nurse)**

## 2. What is Hep C?

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- Hepatitis C is the **name** that has been given to a virus that affects the liver
- When a person has the Hep C virus, the liver becomes inflamed or swollen
- This is why it is called hepatitis, because 'hepa' means liver and 'itis' means inflammation or swelling
- The swelling can cause damage to the liver and this can eventually interfere with normal liver functions
- Hep C is passed from one person to another when infected blood comes in contact with another person's blood
- Some people get rid of the Hep C Virus (5-15 out of 100) on their own
- Most people will have it for life unless they are successfully treated with drugs
- Everyone reacts differently to having Hep C. Many people have it for years without feeling sick, so they don't know that they have Hep C
- 10-20 people out of a hundred who have ongoing Hep C will develop liver disease (cirrhosis) within 20 years of becoming infected
- It is estimated that there are between 250,000 and 300,000 people in Canada who have Hep C. About 1/3rd don't know they have Hep C
- It is estimated that there are 4,000 new diagnoses of Hep C per year in Canada

**“Hepatitis C is a chronic liver disease that is manageable and treatable for most people. Educate yourself about Hepatitis C and access support systems. Explore if treatment will work for you. Abstain from alcohol.”**  
Colleen (cleared Hep C with drug treatment)

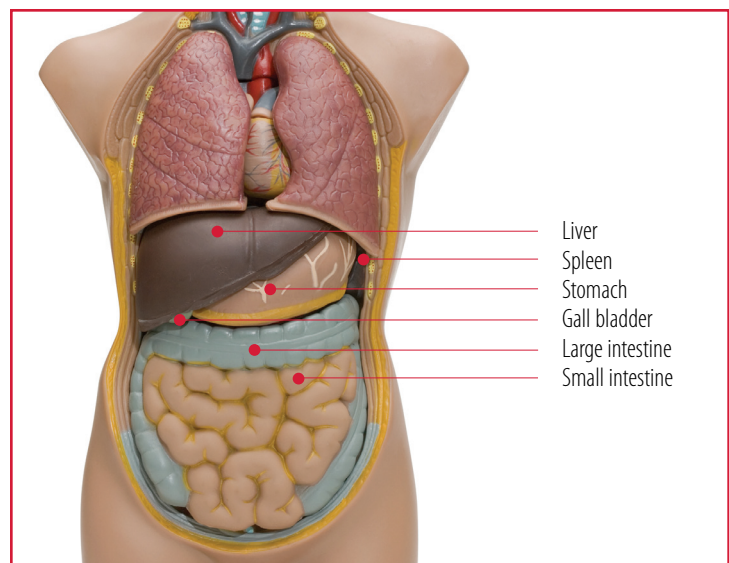
### 3. What does the liver do?

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- The liver is the largest internal organ in your body
- In an adult male, it is about the size of a football and weighs about 3 pounds
- It is located on the right side just under and below the lower part of the rib cage
- Almost everything you put in your mouth eventually makes its way through your liver

#### The liver:

- Stores necessary nutrients
- Processes drugs for use and disposal
- Cleanses your system
- Breaks down fat
- Builds proteins
- Helps to prevent bleeding
- Makes hormones



When your liver is damaged, it can't do these important jobs and eventually you will feel the effects of this.

## 4. How does Hep C affect your liver? (Disease Progression)

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- Most people (2 out of 3) with Hep C don't develop serious liver disease and they can feel normal and healthy
- It usually takes 20-30 years to develop serious liver disease

### Phase I: Infection

- Hep C virus enters the liver through the blood
- Hep C virus reproduces and gets into more liver cells

### Phase II: Inflammation

- Infected liver cells become swollen (inflamed)
- The swelling causes the liver cells to die

### Phase III: Fibrosis

- In time, scarring (fibrosis) of the liver develops among the healthy and swollen cells
- The development of scarring can depend on how long a person has had Hep C

### Phase IV: Cirrhosis

- With increased scarring, the liver becomes hard and this is called cirrhosis
- Cirrhosis affects normal liver function
- People with cirrhosis are more likely to get liver cancer



**“Remain hopeful because there is lots that we can do to help you live well with Hep C.”** Len (Community Health Doctor)

## How will you feel if your liver becomes damaged from Hep C?

- Many people who have Hep C feel normal and healthy
- You may or may not have some of the following signs of liver disease:
  - Feeling tired, less energetic and not able to work as much
  - A tender, achy feeling on right side
  - Decreased appetite, which causes weight loss
  - Bruising and bleeding easily
- Signs of *Advanced* Liver Disease:
  - May or may not have abnormal blood tests
  - Yellow skin and eyes (jaundice)
  - Fluid builds up in the stomach area
  - Muscle cramps
  - Vomiting blood that comes from veins in the throat area
  - Passing blood in bowel movements
  - Poor memory, reduced ability to concentrate or mental confusion
  - Weight loss
  - Bleeding very easily
  - Itchy skin

Sometimes people feel many of the signs of cirrhosis – but tests show that their livers are not damaged at all. Some of these signs may be caused by something other than liver disease.

## 5. Hepatitis A, B and C... What's the difference?

	Hep A	Hep B	Hep C
Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contaminated food</li> <li>Contaminated water (ice cubes)</li> <li>Oral-fecal route</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blood-to-blood</li> <li>Sexual contact</li> <li>Mother-to-infant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blood-to-blood</li> <li>Sexual contact (low)</li> <li>Mother-to-infant</li> </ul>
Disease Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mild illness</li> <li>Usually recover on own</li> <li>Not a carrier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>85% clear virus</li> <li>Presence of Hep C can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5-15% clear virus</li> <li>Presence of Hep C can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer</li> </ul>
Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supportive treatment until infection over</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most adults fight off infection naturally</li> <li>Interferon/antiretroviral therapies available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interferon and combination</li> <li>Interferon and ribavirin therapy available</li> </ul>
Vaccine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available (free for persons with Hep C at Sexual Health Centre - 179 Clarence St.)</li> <li>Especially for travellers, high risk people and people with HIV, Hep B and/or Hep C</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available (free for persons with Hep C at Sexual Health Centre)</li> <li>Immunization in schools in Canada and for:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>healthcare workers</li> <li>travellers to endemic areas</li> <li>people with HIV or Hep C</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not available</li> </ul>

**“You should make sure that you have your Hepatitis A and B vaccine.”**

Joanna (Street Outreach Nurse Practitioner)

## 6. What are the tests for Hep C?

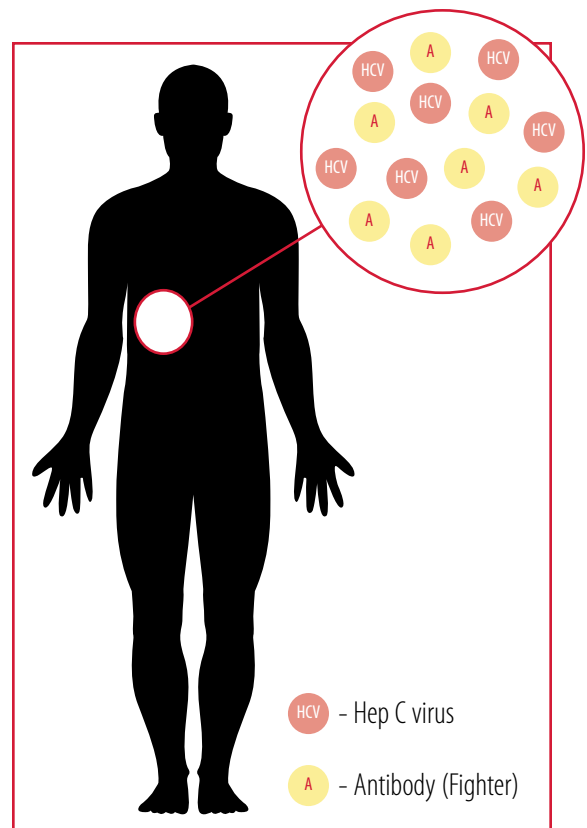
### There are tests to find out:

- If you have the Hep C virus
- The type of Hep C virus you have
- How much of the virus is present in your blood
- If the virus is damaging your liver

**NO ONE TEST GIVES A COMPLETE PICTURE.** A doctor looks at: blood tests, a liver biopsy, and also considers how you feel before she/he can know how much your liver has been damaged by the Hep C virus.

### First you must know that:

- If the Hep C virus gets into your body, your body produces fighters that specifically target the Hep C virus
- These fighters are called Hep C antibodies
- It can take 3 or more months for your body to produce the fighters (antibodies) after the Hep C virus gets into your body
- Sometimes, with the help of the fighters (antibodies), your body can get rid of the Hep C virus without drug treatment (about 15 in a 100 people)



### The first Hep C test:

- The first blood test does not look for the Hep C virus
- The first test looks for the Hep C fighters (antibodies)
- Remember that it can take up to three or more months to make the fighters (antibodies)
- If the first test comes back positive for the fighters (antibodies), then there is an 85% chance that you have the Hep C virus

### The second test (HCV RNA):

- The second blood test checks for the presence of the Hep C virus
- If it is positive, you have the Hep C virus (as well as the fighters)
- If it is negative, this means you don't have the Hep C virus but you still have the fighters (antibodies)
- Once you have the fighters, you will always have them
- The fighters can't hurt you, but you can still catch the virus again (having the antibodies does not mean that you are immune to getting the Hep C virus again)

### Viral load:

- This blood test checks how much of the virus is in your blood

### Genotype:

- There are different types of Hep C virus – each is called a genotype
- They are like the different members of the same family - related but not all are exactly alike
- Genotype testing is done to figure out the length of time someone receives drug treatment

Once a doctor knows that you have the Hep C virus, more tests are done to see if the Hep C virus is damaging your liver.

- When your liver is infected with Hep C, substances (enzymes) that are normally made by your liver can leak out of the liver into the bloodstream
- A blood test can tell if you have higher than normal levels of these enzymes leaking into your blood
- Drinking large amounts of alcohol can increase these enzymes in your blood
- Two common tests are AST and ALT

See [www.labtestonline.org/index.html](http://www.labtestonline.org/index.html) for more information about other lab tests.

“Find out what your disease stage is. You are probably not as sick as you think you are.” Mary Frances (living with Hep C)

### A liver biopsy is:

- A special procedure to remove a tiny piece of your liver, which is then examined under a microscope
- The most common way to tell how much liver damage, if any, is present
- Also done to be sure that liver disease is the cause of your symptoms

### How is a biopsy done?

- A specialized doctor does the liver biopsy
- The skin above the area of your liver is frozen; a needle is put through your skin into the liver; a tiny piece is sucked through the needle into the syringe
- Sometimes an ultrasound is done first to locate the exact position of your liver
- You are awake for the whole procedure
- If you are stressed out before the test, the doctor may give you a medication to calm you down

## 7. How do you stay healthy with Hep C?

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### If you can...

- Quit drinking alcohol
- Quit using drugs
- Quit smoking
- Reduce stress
- Eat healthy foods that are low in fat and sugar
- Drink eight or more glasses of water a day
- Maintain healthy weight and try not to become overweight
- Lose weight, if overweight - even a 10% loss helps decrease liver damage
- Take a multi-vitamin, but not individual vitamins unless your doctor advises it
- Check with your doctor before taking any medications
- Have regular check-ups with your doctor
- Get vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B
- Join a support group
- Find out as much as you can about Hep C
- Talk to other people who have Hep C

**“Speak to people who know about Hep C. There is lots of help out there.”**

**Vince (living with Hep C)**

## Nutrition:

We know that eating well increases your body's ability to fight disease.

### Good nutrition can help:

- The liver repair itself
- Improve response to treatment
- Decrease treatment side effects
- To cope with the side effects of treatment
- Slow progression of the disease

### Nutrition advice:

- It is important to eat nutritious low fat foods and limit intake of high fat and high sugar foods
- Try to eat different foods from all four-food groups in *Canada's Food Guide*
- Eat lots of whole grains, vegetables and fruits to maximize anti-oxidants
- Eat lots of foods high in vitamin A & C, but do not take individual vitamins
- Research shows that people with liver damage need more protein to help rebuild the liver

For healthy eating, see *Canada's Food Guide*:

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html)

**Exercise:**

- Check with your doctor
- Avoid extremes

**Exercise can:**

- Relieve tiredness, stress and depression
- Improve appetite
- Build up the immune system
- Improve your sense of well-being and self-esteem

**Be nice to your liver by:**

- Avoiding herbal products that are damaging to the liver
- Avoiding bug sprays, paint sprays and other chemical sprays
- Being careful what you breathe - inhaled substances can eventually go to your liver. Even aerosol cleaners can hurt the liver
- Being careful what gets on your skin - chemicals can be absorbed through your skin and make their way into your liver and cause damage

## 8. What about vitamins, herbal & alternative therapies?

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You must talk with your doctor before using vitamins, herbs or natural therapies. Many herbs are highly damaging to the liver.

- There is no scientific proof that alternative therapies can cure or even reduce symptoms of Hep C. Still, people use herbs to help with Hep C

### Caution:

- Substances that are labeled “natural” or “herbal” are not necessarily helpful or even safe to use
- Many herbal medicines have not been tested at all and this is why they can be unsafe to use

The most commonly used herbal remedies for liver disease are Milk Thistle and Licorice Root. If you want to try them, it is important to consult a medical doctor first.

### Milk Thistle (Sylmarin):

- It is the most common herb used for Hep C
- So far, studies show that it does not cure liver disease
- It *might* help a cirrhotic liver to function better
- So far, no negative side effects have been reported

### Licorice Root (*glycyrrhiza glabra*):

- It is the second most common herb used for Hep C
- Studies show it *might* have antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties
- Can cause serious side effects such as high blood pressure, fluid retention, and electrolyte imbalance

## Herbs that are known to damage the liver:

- Artemesia
- *Atractylis gummifera*
- Bush Tea
- *Callilepsis laureola*
- Chapparal lead (creosote bush, greasewood)
- Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*)
- Crotonaria
- Germander
- Gordolobo herbal tea
- Heliotropium
- Jin-Bu-Huang
- Kava (*Peper methysticum*)\*
- Kombucha mushroom (tea)
- Ma-Huang (*Ephedra sinica*)
- Margosa oil
- Mate tea (Paraguay)
- Mistletoe
- Pennyroyal (squawmint oil)
- Sassafras
- *Senecio aureus*
- Senna
- Skullcap
- Symphytum
- Valerian root

\* – Health Canada has ordered a stop to the sale of all products containing kava because it is linked to serious liver problems.

For more information, the following book is available at The Ottawa Public Library: *Herbs: Everyday Reference for Health Professionals*, Frank Chandler editor-in-chief. Published by The Canadian Pharmacists Association and the Canadian Medical Association c.2000.

### **Vitamins:**

- If you have a balanced diet, you don't really need vitamins
- One multivitamin a day might help the liver
- Large doses of vitamins can be harmful to the liver
- Avoid high doses of vitamins A, C and D
- You should not take extra iron supplements unless prescribed by your doctor

### **Other Therapies:**

Mind-body or energy based therapies such as: yoga, meditation, prayer, reiki, biofeedback etc. can be very helpful for people with Hep C:

- They can help to reduce stress and depression
- They can strengthen your immune system
- They can help you to cope with the side effects of Hep C drug treatment
- They can help you to feel that you have control over your life even though you have Hep C
- They can help you to make lifestyle changes such as quitting alcohol, drugs, smoking and maintaining a healthy weight

Talking to a counselor can also help to reduce your stress levels, feel some control over your life and give you a better sense of well-being.

## 9. How do alcohol, drugs & cigarettes affect someone with Hep C?

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- Alcohol can harm your liver more than any other substance
- It has been proven that drinking too much alcohol over a long period of time causes liver diseases such as cirrhosis and liver cancer
- Drinking alcohol and Hep C do more harm together than each does alone
- Regular drinking raises the amount of Hep C virus in the body
- People with Hep C who are alcoholics are much more likely to develop cirrhosis and cancer of the liver
- Women who drink alcohol develop liver disease more easily than men who do, and they require less alcohol for this to happen
- Alcohol interferes with the liver's ability to heal itself
- People with Hep C who drink regularly can lose important vitamins

### Should I stop drinking completely?

- **YES, you should stop drinking completely**
- We do not know what a safe drinking level is for people with Hep C, so it is best to stop drinking alcohol completely
- It isn't easy to stop drinking, but it is the most important change that you can make to help prevent cirrhosis or liver cancer

## What if I can't stop drinking?

- Try to reduce the amount and frequency that you drink
- One kind of alcoholic drink is not better for your liver than another
- It is the amount of alcohol in the drink that matters, not the type of drink
- The following are equal in alcohol content:
  - 12 oz. of beer
  - 5 oz. of wine
  - 3 oz. of sherry or port
  - 1 ½ oz. of spirits (rum, rye, vodka etc.)
- If you drink alcohol regularly you should not take Tylenol – together they are very damaging to the liver

## If you cannot stop drinking alcohol or using drugs keep the following in mind:


- While you are using drugs and alcohol try to eat well and drink lots of water before you start and while you are using
- Binges are harder on your liver than spreading your use over time – try to give your liver a rest by taking two alcohol and drug free days a week
- If you can't take two days off from using, then take one. If you can't take a whole day off, take a few hours
- It is especially important to take a break after big binges
- During your break get lots of rest, drink lots of water and eat well

### Alcohol and Drug Treatment:

- If you are still drinking alcohol you cannot receive Hep C drug treatment
- Drinking reduces the effectiveness of drug treatment

### Smoking and Liver Disease:

- Studies show that people who smoked in the past and people who continue to smoke have more swelling and scarring of their livers than non-smokers do
- Researchers recommend that people with Hep C should stop or reduce smoking as it could make their liver disease worse



**“Most people who have Hep C live long and healthy lives if they don’t drink alcohol. We have the best treatments that we’ve ever had.”** Hannah (Registered Nurse)

## 10. How does Hep C affect pregnant women & their babies?

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- Pregnant women cannot receive drug treatment for Hepatitis C because it will harm the baby
- If a woman has received Hep C drug treatment, she must wait 6 months before getting pregnant
- About 5-10 of every 100 mothers with Hep C will pass it on to their babies
- Most often, women who have Hep C feel normal when they are pregnant and also after the birth of the baby
- The blood tests for liver changes are usually normal in pregnancy, but tend to change a little after the baby's birth
- Soon after the baby is born, the baby is tested for Hep C
- You can safely breastfeed your baby, but you must stop if your nipples become cracked or bleed. You may start again after they heal
- Most babies who get Hep C from their mother may be well for many years
- Children with Hep C may develop liver disease and are at risk for developing cirrhosis many years later
- A small number of children who develop cirrhosis may get liver cancer
- Hep C drug treatment is only given to people over the age of 18
- Children with Hep C should have regular check-ups with a doctor who knows about Hep C

## 11. Who needs to know that you have Hep C?

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- Your sexual partner
- Any person who will be in contact with your blood
- You should tell healthcare professionals such as dentists, doctors and nurses, but you should also know that:
  - In the event of an emergency - all healthcare and emergency services providers (paramedics, firefighters) are trained to take precautions when handling blood or body fluids
  - This is called “universal precautions”
- You don’t need to tell anyone who is not at risk of getting Hep C from you
- You don’t need to tell employers, fellow employees, neighbours, friends or even family members if you are not exposing them to your blood

You may want to tell people who are close to you that you have Hep C even though they are not at risk for getting it from you.

- You may feel that you shouldn’t keep this from them and you may also want to have emotional support from the person

**“You are not alone, so don’t close in on yourself.”**  
Ray (cleared Hep C with treatment)



**It is not easy to tell someone that you have Hep C. Here are some tips for telling someone that you have Hep C:**

- You may want to plan this with a social worker, a nurse, a counselor, a doctor or someone else who can be objective and helpful
- Take your time before revealing that you have Hep C - be sure that you are emotionally ready to share this information
- Plan an appropriate time to tell the person
- Be sure you know about the **real** risks of passing on the Hep C virus
- Prepare yourself for the possible responses - many people respond with fear because they do not know enough about Hep C
- Once you tell them - you may not be the best person to explain things
- It is a good idea to provide written information about Hep C or refer them to someone who is knowledgeable about Hep C rather than trying to answer their questions by yourself (trying to answer by yourself may make you feel defensive)
- It may be especially important for your sexual partner to talk to a professional who is knowledgeable about Hep C

**See the Hep C Resources section for references about Hep C and your legal obligations.**

## 12. What about Hep C drug treatment?

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- There is a drug treatment, but it is not for everyone
- You and a Hep C specialist will decide if you should receive drug treatment
- Once the decision to be treated is made, you will receive lots of information about the treatment and the side effects from the specialist
- Different doctors use different guidelines for treating but generally:
  - You cannot receive treatment if you drink alcohol because the treatment will not work
  - People under the age of 18 cannot receive the treatment
  - Pregnant woman cannot receive the treatment because it harms the baby
  - You cannot receive treatment if you are using drugs
  - Some doctors treat people who are stabilized on a methadone program
  - Treatment can cause severe depression, so a doctor may wait until you are feeling emotionally well before starting the treatment
  - You may not need drug treatment if your liver is still very healthy



**“Get on the treatment if you can - it kick-started me to go back to school and study.”** Gerry (cleared Hep C with drug treatment)

### Some other facts about Hep C drug treatment:

- Treatment is very expensive, but you may be eligible for financial assistance
- You may need to be on the treatment anywhere from 6 months to 1 year
- You will take pills everyday and inject yourself once a week
- There can be serious side effects, but everyone's experience is different
- If you clear the virus with drug treatment, you can get the virus again if you engage in risky behaviours

## 13. Hep C support and services in the Ottawa area

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If the following services do not provide specific programs for people who are affected by Hep C, they may be able to refer you to Hep C support and services.

### Health services in Ottawa:

**The Sexual Health Centre** · 179 Clarence St. · 234-4641 (24 hr line: 580-2400)

Community Health Centres may offer services such as counseling, nutrition advice, stress management, smoking cessation, addictions management, support groups and alternative therapies.

**Carlington Community & Health Services** · 900 Merivale Rd. · 722-4000

**Centretown Community Health Centre** · 420 Cooper St. · 233-4443

**Pinecrest-Queensway Health & Community Services** · 1365 Richmond Rd., 2nd floor · 820-4922

**Sandy Hill Community Health Centre** · 221 Nelson St. · 789-1500

**Oasis** · 200-116 Lisgar St. · 569-3488

**Somerset West Community Health Centre** · 55 Eccles St. · 238-8210

**South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community** · 1355 Bank St., Suite 600 · 737-5115

**Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health** · 299 Montreal Rd. · 748-5999

### Finding a family doctor:

The **College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario** will provide the names and numbers of doctors in the Ottawa area who are taking new patients.

Toll free: 1-800-268-7096

For a list of Ottawa walk-in clinics see: **[www.ottawakiosk.com/doctors.html](http://www.ottawakiosk.com/doctors.html)**

If necessary, your family doctor may refer you to one of the Hep C Medical Treatment Centres. They are located at the Ottawa Hospital.

### Youth services in Ottawa:

Central Services: 241-7788

East End Services: 834-2660

West End Services: 596-5621

### Hep C information services:

Canadian Liver Foundation – Eastern Ontario · 733-1433

Canadian Hepatitis C Information Centre · Toll free: 1-866-804-4372 · **[www.hepc.cpha.ca](http://www.hepc.cpha.ca)**

The Hepatitis C Information Network · **[www.hepnet.com](http://www.hepnet.com)**

Hepatitis C Society of Canada · Toll free: 1-800-652-4371 · **[www.hepatitiscsociety.com](http://www.hepatitiscsociety.com)**

Ottawa-Carleton Sexual Health Info Line · 563-2437 · (10am-8pm, Mon-Fri)

**Books about Hep C and related topics:**

***Living with Hep C - A Survivor's Guide, 3rd Edition***

Gregory T. Everson, MD and Hedy Weinberg, Hatherleigh Press, 2002.

***Conquering Hep C***

Willis C. Maddrey, MD, Sales and Distribution: BC Decker Inc., 2000.

***My Mom has Hep C***

Hedy Weinberg and Shira Shump with Gregory T. Everson, MD, Hatherleigh Press, 2000.

**The following books are available at the Ottawa Public Library:**

***The First Year – Hepatitis C – An Essential Guide for the Newly Diagnosed***

Cara Bruce and Lisa Montanarelli.

***Herbs: Everyday Reference for Health Professionals***

Frank Chandler, Editor-in-chief, The Canadian Pharmacists Association and the Canadian Medical Association, c.2000.

***Anatomy of an Illness***

Norman Cousins.

**On video:**

*Understanding Hepatitis – For general readers: A comprehensive discussion of the causes of hepatitis and of the treatments*

James L. Achord M.D.

*Hepatitis C – The Silent Epidemic*

Healthy Living Resources

*Dr. Melissa Palmer's Guide to Hepatitis & Liver Disease – What You Need to Know – Revised Edition*

Dr. Melissa Palmer M.D.

**Legal advice about Hep C:**

There isn't a legal clinic in Ottawa that deals specifically with Hep C issues.

**HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO)** may provide information about human rights and other legal issues regarding Hep C.

Toll free: 1-888-705-8889 · [www.halco.org](http://www.halco.org)

**The Sexual Health Centre in Ottawa** can advise you about your legal obligation to inform sexual partners that you have Hep C.

234-4641 (24 hr 580-2400)

**The University of Ottawa Legal Services** may be able to advise about issues of wrongful dismissal from work that are related to Hep C.

562-5600

## Financial compensation claims for Hep C infection from blood transfusions:

### Hepatitis C Claims Centre (National)

Toll free: 1-877-434-0944

### Ministry of Health and Long-Term care Ontario Hepatitis C Assistance Plan

Toll free: 1-866-222-4977

## Drug and alcohol addictions services:

Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment (DART) · 1-800-565-8603 · [www.dart.on.ca](http://www.dart.on.ca)

Addictions and Problem Gambling Services of Ottawa · Sandy Hill Community Health Centre  
· 789-8941

Alcoholics Anonymous · 211 Bronson Ave. · 237-6000

French AA Groups · 595-1916

Narcotics Anonymous · 236-4674

Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services · 312 Parkdale Ave. · 724-4881

Ottawa Addictions Treatment Centre (Methadone) · 401 Somerset St. West · 233-1114

Ottawa Withdrawal Management Centre (Detox. Centre) · 62 Bruyere St. · 241-1525

Royal Ottawa Hospital, Substance Use and Concurrent Disorders Program · 1145 Carling Ave.  
· 722-6521 ext 6508

Needle Exchange Programs (see insert) · The Site Van: 797-2735 or 232-3232

## 14. Bibliography

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*50 Ways To Love Your Liver*

Pamphlet produced by The Canadian Liver Foundation

Canadian Hepatitis C Information Centre

**[www.hepc.cpha.ca](http://www.hepc.cpha.ca)**

*Conquering Hepatitis C*

Willis C. Maddrey, MD, Sales and Distribution: BC Decker Inc., 2004.

*Knowledge is Power – Take Control of Hepatitis C*

Pamphlet produced by Schering Canada Inc. in consultation with The Canadian Association Hepatology Nurses (CAHN)

*Living With Hepatitis C – A Survivor's Guide – 3rd Edition*

Gregory T. Everson, M.D., F.A.C.P. and Hedy Weinberg, Hatherleigh Press, New York, 2002.

## Hep C Checklist

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- If you can, quit drinking alcohol
  - If you can, quit using street drugs
  - If you can, quit smoking cigarettes
  - Get vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B  
(available to people with Hep C for free at Sexual Health Centre - 179 Clarence St.)
  - Inform your sexual partner that you have Hep C
  - Practice safer sex if you have many sexual partners
  - See your family doctor regularly
  - Eat a well balanced diet
  - Reduce your intake of fatty foods
  - Maintain a healthy weight and lose weight if you are overweight
  - Rest as much as you feel you need to
  - Drink as much water as you can
  - Take a multi-vitamin each day
  - Join a support group or talk to others who have Hep C
  - Look for mental, emotional and spiritual help
  - Talk to your doctor before taking drugs, vitamins or herbal remedies
  - Do not share needles, razors or toothbrushes
  - Do not donate blood
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