

## HEPATITIS C: WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

Many people who have hepatitis C stay healthy throughout their lives. You can start now to take care of your liver and prevent future damage. There are many things you can do to keep yourself healthy. There are treatments available that can cure hepatitis C in many people.

### What changes should I make to my lifestyle?

There are many ways to keep yourself healthy if you have hepatitis C:

- Maintain a healthy body weight.
- Eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet.
- Exercise regularly.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Avoid high-risk behaviours such as injecting drugs or sharing drug equipment (like needles or pipes).
- Get vaccinated against hepatitis A and hepatitis B (if necessary).

### How can I prevent spreading the virus to my family and friends?

Since hepatitis C is spread through blood, it's important to avoid sharing any items that might have your blood on them – things like razors, toothbrushes and nail clippers. Be sure to cover any open wounds or sores with a bandaid.

Hepatitis C is **not** spread by sneezing, coughing, hugging, holding or shaking hands, using toilet seats, or sharing food, drinks, eating utensils or drinking glasses.

### Will hepatitis C affect my sex life?

The hepatitis C virus can be spread during sex but the chance is very low. If you have one, long-term sexual partner, it's very unlikely that you will give that person hepatitis C during sex.

The chance of spreading the virus during sex is higher if you have many sexual partners, have rough or anal sex, or have the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Anyone who has many sexual partners should always use condoms to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, even though there is no evidence that condoms stop the spread of hepatitis C during sex.

Adapted from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A guide to Comprehensive Hepatitis C Counseling and Testing. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/resources/professionals/pdfs/counselingandtestingpc.pdf>.

