

HEPATITIS **B**

BUSTING THE MYTHS

Viral hepatitis (such as hepatitis B and C) causes liver inflammation and damage. It affects a lot of people and can be very serious but is often poorly understood.

There are lots of myths about viral hepatitis that contribute to stigma and discrimination and can stop people getting the help they need.

Get the facts and help stop stigma!

You can get hepatitis B from sharing food

FALSE!

True: Hepatitis B is not spread by saliva so sharing food and kissing is not a risk.

Hepatitis B is only passed on:

- from mother to baby in pregnancy and birth
- by blood to blood contact (such as sharing injecting equipment and unsterile tattoos)
- through unprotected sexual contact.



My doctor definitely would have told me if I had hepatitis B, or if I needed a test

FALSE!

True: Hepatitis B is not a routine blood test.

You should not assume you have been tested and ask your doctor to be sure.



If someone has hepatitis B they would be sick and have yellow skin and eyes

FALSE!

True: Most people with hepatitis B look and feel healthy.

Yellow skin and eyes only happens when a person is very unwell and it is very serious.



If I don't need medication then I'm a healthy carrier

FALSE!

True: There is no such thing as a healthy carrier. If you have hepatitis B there is always a risk for liver damage.

Seeing your doctor often is important to reduce liver damage and to know if you need medication or not.



For further information, check out the Hepatitis Victoria website: www.hepvic.org.au

Or download the **LiverWELL**™ app.



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HEPATITIS C

Viral hepatitis (such as hepatitis B and C) causes liver inflammation and damage. It affects a lot of people and can be very serious but is often poorly understood.

There are lots of myths about viral hepatitis that contribute to stigma and discrimination and can stop people getting the help they need.

Get the facts and help stop stigma!

Treatment for hepatitis C involves injections and makes people really sick

FALSE!

True: Treatment to cure hepatitis C has changed a lot. It is now tablets only, no interferon with only very mild side effects, if any! It is very effective with a 95% success rate of curing hepatitis C.



People living with hepatitis C are fine and it doesn't seem to cause any problems

FALSE!

True: People living with hepatitis C may experience symptoms such as being tired, losing their appetite and feeling like they have 'brain fog.' More seriously, living with hepatitis C increases the risk of liver cancer and liver failure. Getting treatment for hepatitis C will reduce this risk.



BUSTING THE MYTHS

Hepatitis C only effects people who have a history of injecting drug use

FALSE!

True: It is discrimination to treat anyone differently on the basis of their hepatitis C status and/or how they contracted it.

Hepatitis C is transmitted when the blood of a person living with hepatitis C gets into the bloodstream of someone else. Sharing injecting equipment is the most common way hepatitis C is transmitted in Australia. There are other transmission risks including unsterile tattoos and piercings and blood transfusions overseas or before 1990 in Australia.



If someone is currently using drugs or drinking then they can't get hepatitis C treatment

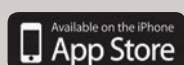
FALSE!

True: Everyone over 18 with a Medicare card can access treatment and should be encouraged to do so – there are no restrictions.



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