

Hepatitis C and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Around 170,000 people in Australia have hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C is over four times higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Hepatitis C can cause serious liver damage.



Hepatitis C can be cured



New treatments are tablets only, and usually take only 8 - 12 weeks.

Be tested

If you may have been exposed to the hepatitis C virus, ask your doctor or Aboriginal health worker for a blood test.

Stay safe

There's no vaccine for hepatitis C, so it is important to stay safe to prevent getting the virus again.

Contacts

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E: info@hepvic.org.au

W: www.hepvic.org.au

Hepatitis Infoline: **1800 703 003**

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The LiverWELL app developed by Hepatitis Victoria has lots of tips on how to keep your liver healthy:



eating well: cut back on foods that are high in fat and high in sugar



getting active: do some exercise everyday



feeling well: take care of yourself emotionally, spiritually and physically



drink aware: cut back on how much alcohol you drink or try to stop altogether

For information and practical tips on managing your liver health, visit: www.liverwell.org.au or download the **LiverWELL app**

LiverWELL[®]



Thanks to all the people from communities and services for their input and feedback.

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Win the fight against hep C

Love Your Liver

Get tested

Live healthy

Get treated and cured of hep C

Stay safe



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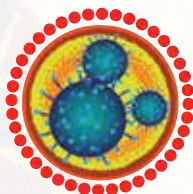


Love your liver

The liver helps keep us healthy in many ways. It is part of the digestive system, processing food and nutrients and removing toxins. It creates hormones and regulates vitamins.

What does hepatitis C do to the liver?

Hepatitis C is a virus that can damage the liver and is a cause of liver disease. Left untreated some people with hepatitis C can become very sick and may even develop liver failure and liver cancer.



Symptoms

Some people feel sick, tired, have pain or fever from the time they get the virus, but many people don't know they have hepatitis C – it can take years for people to feel sick.

How can I protect myself from hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a virus spread through blood from a person with the virus to blood of another person so:

- Always use a new needle when injecting drugs and keep injecting equipment for your own use only
- Backyard tattoos carry a high risk. Get tattoos or piercings only from registered parlours
- Be aware of blood when playing contact sports
- Avoid fights - be aware of blood
- Keep toothbrushes, combs and razors for your own use only - sometimes blood gets on these items.



How can I get tested for hepatitis C?

- A blood test is the only way to know if you have hepatitis C
- Talk to your doctor or Aboriginal health worker about getting a blood test for hepatitis C (free under Medicare)
- You could ask for a blood test for hepatitis C as part of a yearly health check.



Treatment

Treatment can cure hepatitis C.

New treatments have no or only mild side effects.

95% of people are cured with treatment.

- Speak to your doctor or Aboriginal health worker
- Ask your doctor about having check ups after finishing treatment
- Treatment is now available for people 12 years and over
- Tablets only, (usually one tablet a day)
- Usually takes only 8 – 12 weeks.



Where can I get treatment?

- GPs, doctors at hospital liver clinics, and some nurse practitioners. Ask at your Aboriginal Health Service
- Treatment is free under Closing the Gap for concession card holders, and is free or very low cost under Medicare.

Live healthy

We need to love our liver!



Try and eat healthy:

- Plenty of fruit, veggies and whole grains
- Less fat, sugar and salt



Try and avoid alcohol or drink only a little:

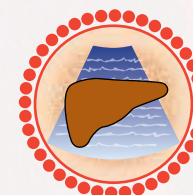
- No more than two standard drinks a day is best to avoid harm from alcohol. Have regular liver checks



Try and quit smoking or cut down on smokes.



Try and be active and stay connected with family, community and culture



Have regular liver checks if you have hepatitis B or hepatitis C. (talk to your doctor).