

Hepatitis C: What You Need to Know

What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a viral infection that causes liver inflammation (swelling). **Hepatitis C** can lead to serious liver damage. The **hepatitis C** virus is spread through contact with **HCV-infected** blood.

Basic Facts

- Many people with **hepatitis C** don't know they have it, mainly because symptoms can take decades to appear
- The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that **all** adults aged **18 to 79 years** be screened for **hepatitis C**
- All pregnant women should be screened for **hepatitis C** early in their pregnancy

**Hepatitis C has
two phases:
Acute and
Chronic**



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Acute Symptoms

- Jaundice
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Fever
- Muscle aches

Chronic Symptoms

- Bleeding easily
- Bruising easily
- Fatigue
- No appetite
- Jaundice
- Dark-colored urine
- Itchy skin
- Fluid buildup in the stomach area
- Swelling in the legs
- Weight loss
- Confusion, drowsiness, and slurred speech
- Spiderlike blood vessels on the skin

Source: cdc.gov

How it Spreads

Hepatitis C is spread through contact with blood from an infected person. Today, most people become infected with the **hepatitis C** virus by sharing needles or other equipment used to prepare and inject drugs.

Diagnosis

Blood tests, magnetic resonance elastography (MRE), transient elastography, and possibly a liver biopsy.

Treatment

Safe and effective medications are available to treat and possibly cure **hepatitis C**.



Prevention

There is no vaccine to prevent **hepatitis C**. The best way to prevent **hepatitis C** is by avoiding behaviors that can spread the disease, especially injecting drugs with non-sterile injection equipment.

