

HEPATITIS C FACT SHEET

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What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that causes liver inflammation, sometimes leading to serious liver damage.

How does it spread?

Hepatitis C is transmitted primarily by exposure to blood infected with the hepatitis C virus.

Signs and Symptoms

Hepatitis C is one of the viruses that usually does not show symptoms – even so, it can transition to what is known as a chronic Hepatitis C infection, and cause serious and long term effects without present symptoms. If symptoms occur, there is a chance that they may not appear until several years of significant damage to the liver. If symptoms appear early on after infection, referred to as the acute phase, they will appear 1-3 months after exposure, last 2 weeks to 3 months, and can present as:

- Fatigue;
- Jaundice;
- Nausea;
- Fever; and
- Muscle aches

Chronic Hepatitis C infection symptoms can look like:

- Bleeding or bruising easily;
- Jaundice;
- Drowsiness, confusion, and/or slurred speech;
- Darkly colored urine; and
- Itchy skin

Test Options

Testing for Hepatitis C will be conducted using a blood test.

Treatment Options

Chronic HCV is often curable with oral medications taken every day for 2 –6 months. It is important to complete the treatment plan your health practitioner provides entirely i.e. do not share your medication or take only a portion of the medication provided. Medication will stop the infection, however, it may not undo any permanent damage caused by the disease.