

WHAT IS HEPATITIS?

A PUBLICATION OF THE
HEPATITIS C SUPPORT PROJECT

Symptoms
Transmission
Prevention

There are over 100 causes of hepatitis, but if it is caused by a virus it is given a letter, such as hepatitis A, B, or C. The hepatitis C virus can cause ongoing (chronic) infection. Many people with HCV do not get sick, but some people can develop serious health problems, especially after 10, 20, or 30 years.

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The information in this brochure is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical provider for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

This information is provided by the Hepatitis C Support Project, a non-profit organization for HCV education, support and advocacy.

For more information about hepatitis C visit:

The Hepatitis C Support Project
www.hcvadvocate.org

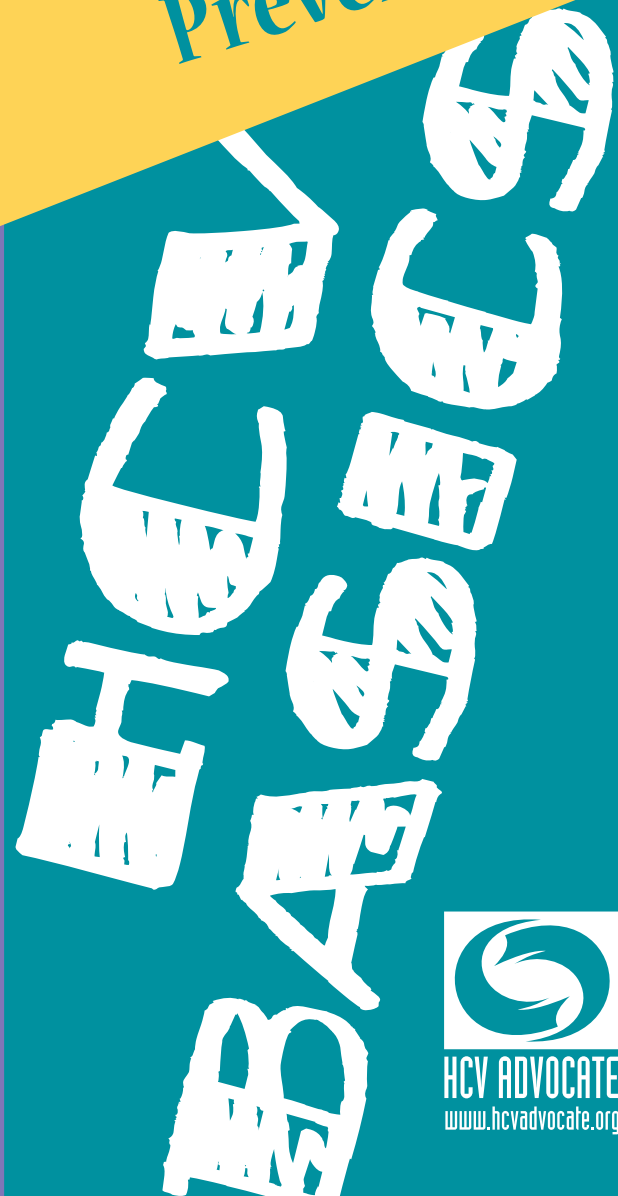
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HEPATITIS
MEANS...

“INFLAMMATION
OF THE LIVER”



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SYMPTOMS

Many people with HCV have no symptoms. The most common symptoms include feeling tired (fatigue) or having muscle and joint aches or nausea. Some people say the symptoms feel like they have a mild case of the flu.

MEDICATIONS APPROVED TO TREAT HCV INCLUDE:

INTERFERON

a medicine that you inject under the skin.

PEGYLATED INTERFERON

a type of interferon that lasts longer in the body and works better.

HCV PROTEASE INHIBITOR

a pill that is used with pegylated interferon and ribavirin.

RIBAVIRIN

a pill that is used with interferon.

STAYING HEALTHY TIPS

- See your health-care provider for regular check-ups.
- Eat a healthy and balanced diet.
- Rest when you are tired.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get the hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccines if you are not already protected.
- Stop or cut down on alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes.
- Try not to worry too much.

TRANSMISSION PREVENTION

HCV is spread by direct blood-to-blood contact.

- Don't share needles, syringes, or works (cooker, cotton, ties, pipes, straws, water).
- Don't share personal items like razors, nail clippers, toothbrushes or pierced earrings.
- Make sure tattoo and body piercing equipment is sterilized—only new needles and a separate ink pot.
- Cover open sores or wounds.
- Sexual transmission is uncommon; safer sex—using latex condoms—can reduce the risk.
- A mother can transmit HCV to her baby during pregnancy, but this doesn't happen very often, and breastfeeding is ok.

TREATMENT

Most people with HCV lead normal healthy lives and some people may not need treatment with HCV medicines because the virus is not causing much liver damage.

There is a combination of 2 or 3 medicines to treat hepatitis C—pegylated interferon, ribavirin and your doctor might have you take an HCV protease inhibitor. The combination of medicines to treat hepatitis C can cure up to about 8 out of 10 people who take it.

Talk with your doctor or nurse about whether you need treatment and what you can do to stay healthy.



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