

## 9 OUT OF 10

There are many people who take methadone that have hepatitis C (HCV for short). In fact it may be that as many as 9 out of 10 people who take methadone also have HCV. For this reason people who take methadone should be tested to see if they have hepatitis C.



## A Publication of the Hepatitis C Support Project

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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 practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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Contact your local health department or one of the following agencies for more information on hepatitis C:



**The Hepatitis C Support Project**  
www.hcvadvocate.org

**Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention Hotline**  
888-443-7232

**Hepatitis Foundation  
International**  
800-891-0707

**American Liver Foundation**  
800-223-0179

# Hepatitis C & Methadone



## STAYING HEALTHY

**HCV TREATMENT** People who have HCV and take methadone can be treated with HCV medicines even while taking methadone. Talk to your doctor or nurse to find out if you need to be treated for HCV.

**TWO DRUGS** There are two drugs used to treat HCV that are taken together – interferon plus ribavirin. Interferon is a drug that needs to be injected under the skin. There is a new type of interferon called pegylated interferon that is a form of timed-released interferon that only needs to be injected once a week. The other medicine taken with interferon is called ribavirin. Ribavirin is a pill or capsule.

**SIDE EFFECTS** The medicines for treating HCV can have some side effects. The good news is that most of these side effects can be taken care of by working closely with a doctor or nurse. The other good news is that around half of the people who take HCV medicines get rid of HCV.

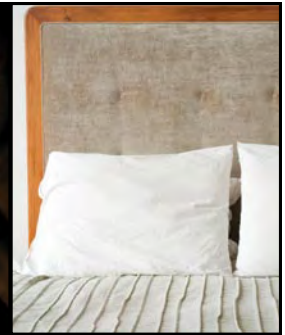
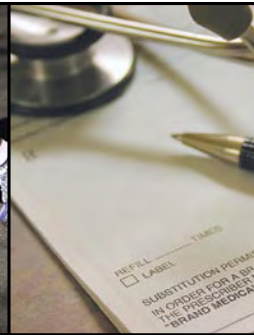
# Hepatitis C & Methadone

## STAYING HEALTHY

**HCV & METHADONE** If you have HCV and take methadone there are many things you can do to stay healthy.

**ALCOHOL** One of the best things you can do is to stop drinking alcohol or cut down on the amount of alcohol you drink.

**GOOD NEWS** The good news is that methadone is safe for the liver unless the liver is so damaged that it can not handle methadone very well. If this happens, the liver is checked by a doctor or nurse to make sure that the methadone dose or amount is safe.



### DIET

Eat a healthy and balanced diet – see a dietician if possible

### EXERCISE

Talk to your doctor or nurse about exercise – walking is one of the best exercises for keeping you healthy

### DOCTOR

See a doctor or nurse for regular check-ups

### SUPPORT

Many people find that support groups are helpful for learning about hepatitis C and for personal support

### REST

Rest when you are tired

**MAKE SURE** your doctor knows about all the medicines you are taking including street drugs, pain and sleep medicines, herbs, vitamins, or even medicines you buy over the counter at a store.

**CONCLUSION** Methadone is safe for the liver and if you take methadone you should be tested for HCV. There are many things you can do to stay healthy including diet and exercise as well as treatment for HCV, if needed.