

# For Family and Friends:

## Caring for Someone with Hepatitis C

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*The information in this guide 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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## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Common Reactions of Caregivers.....	3
How to Cope.....	3
Caregiver Stress Danger Signs.....	4
Protect Yourself from HCV Infection.....	4
Sexual Transmission.....	5
The HCV Patient During Treatment.....	5
Depression, Anxiety, Irritability and Mania.....	6
Resources.....	7





- Maintain social contacts. Ask a friend out for coffee, a movie or a walk. Use the phone or email to stay in touch.
- Ask for help. You aren't Superman or Superwoman. Be specific about the help you need.
- Take a break from care giving. See a friend, go for a walk, read, go to a movie, take a nap – anything that revitalizes you. It is all right to go away for a day, a weekend, or longer if this is what you need.
- Set limits for yourself. Remember the word "no" is a complete sentence.
- Every day, do something you enjoy.
- Focus on the positive.
- Find ways to laugh. Laughter can relieve all sorts of complaints and has no side effects.

## *Caregiver Stress Danger Signs*

Caregiver stress must be taken seriously. If left unmanaged, caregiver stress can be life threatening. Some danger signs are:

- Uncontrollable anger or resentment
- Depression or suicidal thoughts
- Thoughts of harming another or physical abuse
- Misuse of alcohol or drugs
- Sleep problems
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Physical complaints, such as headaches or stomach problems. Some of these may be serious and may affect your blood pressure or heart.

***Important Note:*** *If you have thoughts of suicide or hurting yourself or others, seek immediate professional help. If you have any symptoms of a heart attack, call 911.*

## *Protect Yourself from HCV Infection*

HCV transmission between household members is rare. HCV is contagious, but mostly only through blood-to-blood contact. HCV is not transmitted by hugging, kissing, sneezing, coughing, sharing eating utensils or glasses, or by casual contact. Although the risks are low, it is recommended that family mem-

**“BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF.”**

- **MAX ERHMANN**





