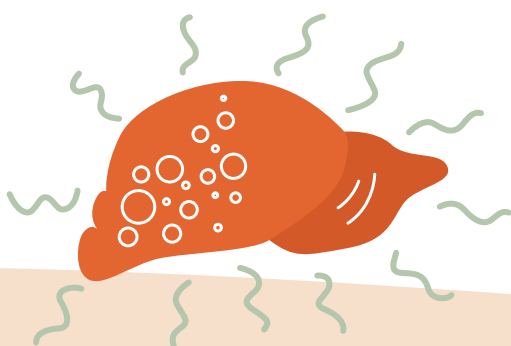


HEPATITIS C



What is it?

Hepatitis C is a viral infection of the liver. The liver is a body part that filters toxins from your blood. About 20% of people who get Hepatitis C are able to get rid of the virus without treatment. But for most people who get infected, Hepatitis C turns into a chronic infection, which means that the infection stays with you for life.



How can you get it?

Hepatitis C can be spread through activities that put you into contact with someone else's blood who has Hepatitis C, such as sharing injection drug equipment, tattoo needles or piercings, toothbrushes, nail clippers, razors or medical procedures with equipment that is not cleaned properly. A mother can also pass Hepatitis C onto a child through birth.

How do you know if you have it?

Many people do not show any signs of Hepatitis C. **When you do show signs, they can include:**



Not feeling hungry



Fever



Nausea and vomiting



Headaches



Feeling very tired



Jaundice, which is when your eyes or skin take on a yellowish colour



To know for sure if you have it, you need to get tested.



Testing

Hepatitis C is tested for through a blood test. This is usually done by drawing blood from your arm. Test results will take a few days to a few weeks to come back.



Treatment

Hepatitis C can be cured in most people with medication. For many people treatment lasts three months.



Prevention

There is no vaccine to protect you from Hepatitis C. Some ways to help prevent the spread of Hepatitis C include:

- ✓ Use barriers like condoms and dental dams during sex
- ✓ Do not share drug equipment such as needles or pipes
- ✓ Make sure you are aware of the health inspection certificates of the tattoo or piercing parlour before getting tattooed or pierced
- ✓ Make sure you see the tattoo artist or piercer open new needles and throw-out used needles
- ✓ You can also choose to engage in sexual activity that does not pose a high risk for spreading Hepatitis C such as giving or receiving a massage, mutual masturbation, or sharing a sexual fantasy
- ✓ You can also ensure that you and your partner have been tested and do not have Hepatitis C before engaging in sexual activity or sharing equipment



Native Women's
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