

HEP C



PASSPORT



HEP C: 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO

- 1.** Stay connected with your Hep C healthcare providers. The road to treatment can sometimes be long. Keep monitoring the health of your liver and don't give up.
- 2.** Get the Hep A and Hep B vaccines. They will protect you from other viruses that can hurt your liver.
- 3.** Get tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). If you have HIV, getting HIV treatment will help keep you healthy.
- 4.** Try to limit or avoid alcohol. Drinking alcohol can make liver injury worse.
- 5.** Try to eat healthy meals, drink water and get rest.
- 6.** If you want to take over-the-counter (OTC) medications and herbal preparations, ask your doctor which ones are safe for the liver.
- 7.** Try to find a support group for people living with Hep C.
- 8.** If you inject drugs, use new drug equipment every time you use drugs. Try not to share it.
- 9.** Try not to share personal care items like toothbrushes, razors or nail files. Cover open wounds.
- 10.** Use a condom during sex. Sex is low risk for passing Hep C but the risk increases with condomless anal sex where blood, HIV and other STIs are present.

WHAT IS THE HEP C PASSPORT?

This booklet is a place to record your health information related to Hep C care and treatment.

You do not have to fill it all out. If you are concerned about confidentiality, you may choose to fill in only some parts. Keep your booklet in a safe place.

This is a space to put the names and contact information of your healthcare providers.

Name: _____

Contact: _____

Name: _____

Contact: _____

Name: _____

Contact: _____



LIVING WITH HEP C



2

Hep C can cause serious liver injury and liver cancer. Taking care of your health now will help you live a long and healthy life. Everyone with Hep C should have their liver checked regularly and be evaluated for Hep C treatment.

DO I HAVE HEP C?

It takes two tests to find out if you have Hep C. A doctor or nurse can give you the tests.

1. Hep C Antibody Test

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Antibodies present:
Yes ____ No ____

The Hep C antibody test checks if the Hep C virus has ever been in your body. If you have antibodies you need to get the Hep C viral load test to find out if you have Hep C now.

2. Hep C Viral Load Test (HCV RNA)

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Detected
 Not Detected

This test looks for the Hep C virus in your blood. If this test detects the virus, you have Hep C.

Hep C Genotype Test

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Genotype: _____

A genotype test tells you what strain of the Hep C virus you have. There are 6 genotypes numbered 1 to 6. Your treatment options may depend on which genotype you have.



WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY HEALTH?

To protect your health consider having these tests and vaccines. A vaccine can stop you from getting an illness. Getting tested for other infections means that you can be treated sooner if you need to be.

4

The Hepatitis A and B tests check to see if you are already protected from these viruses. If you are not protected, talk to your nurse about getting vaccinated for them.

Hepatitis A test

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Antibodies present:
Yes ____ No ____

Hepatitis A vaccinations (to prevent hepatitis A)

Dates: 1) ____ / ____ / ____ 2) ____ / ____ / ____

Hepatitis B test

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Immune:
Yes ____ No ____

Hepatitis B vaccinations (to prevent Hepatitis B)

Dates: 1) ____ / ____ / ____ 2) ____ / ____ / ____
3) ____ / ____ / ____

**Pneumonia vaccine
(to prevent a serious lung infection)**

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

**Flu vaccine
(to prevent the flu)**

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

HIV test

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Tuberculosis skin test

Date: ____ / ____ / ____



CHECKING THE HEALTH OF YOUR LIVER

When you find out you have Hep C it is important to check the health of your liver. This will include blood tests, imaging your liver and measuring liver injury. It may take time to check the health of your liver. Some specialist tests can take weeks to book.

ULTRASOUND AND OTHER LIVER IMAGING

To get a picture of your liver, you will be sent for an ultrasound. This test will show the shape of your liver and check for changes. It can also check for abnormal tissues or tumours. In some cases, you may have to have more tests done, like a CT scan or MRI.

MY ULTRASOUND/ IMAGING

Date	Location	Type of test	Result



BLOOD TESTS

Blood tests are done to check out your general health and the health of the liver. These are a few of the blood tests that will be done to monitor your health.

MY BLOOD TESTS

Date	ALT	AST	Hemoglobin	Platelets

ALT stands for alanine transaminase. It is a liver enzyme that is measured as a part of tests to determine liver health.

AST stands for aspartate transaminase. It is a liver enzyme that is measured as a part of tests to determine liver health.

Hemoglobin is a protein that helps to transport oxygen in your red blood cells.

Platelets are blood cells that help your blood to clot.

Talk to your healthcare provider about what is the right test result for you.



HOW LIVER INJURY OR FIBROSIS IS MEASURED

Over time the Hep C virus causes liver scarring and stiffness. This is called fibrosis. The level or stage of fibrosis is measured from 0 to 4. **F0 means there is no fibrosis and F4 means there is severe liver injury, or cirrhosis.** Cirrhosis can lead to other serious health problems.

There are a number of different tests that measure liver injury.

APRI Score, Fib4 Score, Fibrotest Score

These are blood tests that can be used to estimate the amount of injury (fibrosis) in the liver. They are calculated from the results of blood tests and other factors. Each test generates a number score. These results can be used to determine the stage of liver fibrosis.

Fibroscan Test

A Fibroscan is a test that measures the stiffness of the liver using ultrasound waves. The test result is given as a number score. A higher number means there is more fibrosis in the liver.

Liver Biopsy

During a liver biopsy, a small piece of the liver is removed with a needle. The piece is looked at under a microscope to determine the stage of liver injury.



LIVER INJURY TEST AND FIBROSIS SCORES

Talk to your healthcare provider about how often you need these tests.

Date	Type of test	Score	Fibrosis stage or F- score



GETTING READY FOR TREATMENT

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- If you want to do Hep C treatment, you need to be as physically and emotionally ready as you can be. Sometimes this means getting support with other health issues before starting treatment.
- Do you have housing and food? These things can help make going through treatment easier.
- Do you have people who can support you if you find treatment difficult? Before you start treatment, you may want to ask a friend or family member whether you can reach out to them if you have trouble with treatment.
- If you or your sexual partner(s) could get pregnant, you need to take birth control during treatment and after. Some Hep C medications can seriously harm the fetus.
- Treatment is most likely to be successful if you take your medications every day as prescribed.
- Most people apply to have the cost of treatment covered through publicly funded programs or private health insurance. Ask your healthcare provider to apply for these programs for you.
- Some provinces and territories may only cover one chance at Hep C treatment, so try your best to take your pills as they are prescribed.



CHECKLIST FOR TREATMENT READINESS

Check each box as you complete the steps toward getting ready for treatment

BLOOD TESTS COMPLETED

ULTRASOUND COMPLETED

LIVER INJURY MEASURED

**SUPPORT/ EDUCATION/
GROUP ATTENDANCE IN PLACE**

**YOU AND HEALTHCARE
PROVIDER DECIDE IT'S OK
TO START TREATMENT**



STARTING HEP C TREATMENT

Treatment Coverage Application Submitted

Date:

____ / ____ / ____

Coverage Approval Date

Date:

____ / ____ / ____

Treatment Start Date

Date:

____ / ____ / ____

Which treatment drugs will I be on?

Treatment End Date

Date:

____ / ____ / ____

MY VIRAL TESTS ON TREATMENT

Before and during treatment your doctor or nurse may measure your Hep C viral load.

Viral load before starting treatment: _____

Week 4: _____

End of treatment: _____



MEDICATION TRACKING CHART

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							
Week 5							
Week 6							
Week 7							
Week 8							
Week 9							
Week 10							
Week 11							
Week 12							
Week 13							
Week 14							
Week 15							
Week 16							
Week 17							
Week 18							
Week 19							
Week 20							
Week 21							
Week 22							
Week 23							
Week 24							



TESTING TO SEE IF TREATMENT WORKED OR NOT

12 weeks after you complete Hep C treatment, you will have a blood test to find out if any HCV RNA is detectable in your blood. **If this test result comes back negative or undetectable, you have been cured.** Some doctors may repeat the test another 12 weeks later to make sure the virus is still gone. This is called a sustained virological response, or SVR.

Viral load 12 weeks after treatment: _____

Viral load 24 weeks after treatment: _____

IF YOU ARE CURED FROM TREATMENT

Remember, you can still get re-infected with Hep C. Learn about how to prevent Hep C on the inside cover and talk to your healthcare provider.

IF YOU ARE NOT CURED FROM TREATMENT

If you are not cured there are still lots of things you can do to take care of your liver. See the inside cover for suggestions.

It is important to stay in contact with your healthcare provider so they can talk to you about your future treatment options and other things you can do to keep your liver healthy.



CHECKING THE FOOD PIPE (ESOPHAGUS)

Having cirrhosis also puts you at an increased risk of swelling or bleeding blood vessels in your food pipe (esophagus). To check for this, a specialist can use a tiny camera to look down your throat. This is called an upper endoscopy. Talk to your healthcare provider about how often you need an endoscopy.

MY ENDOSCOPY

Date	Location	Result



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALT: Alanine transaminase is commonly measured as a part of liver function tests to determine liver health.

AST: Aspartate transaminase is commonly measured as a part of liver function tests to determine liver health.

Hep C antibody test: Shows if you have been exposed to the Hep C virus. About 25% of people who are exposed to the Hep C virus will clear the virus on their own.

Biopsy: Medical procedure at the hospital where a tiny piece of liver is removed and studied for damage (fibrosis).

Cirrhosis: The end stage of liver damage in which the liver is badly scarred and doesn't work well.

Direct-acting antivirals (DAAs): A group of medications that directly block the ability of the hepatitis C virus to make copies of itself.

Detected but unquantifiable: Some tests will show that live virus is present in the blood but the amounts are so low that they cannot be accurately counted.

Dormant: A somewhat misleading term, as the Hep C virus does not sleep although it may go through periods of greater or lesser activity.

Fibroscan: A technique used to assess liver damage (fibrosis) using harmless sound waves.



Fibrosis: The formation of hardened fibrous tissue in the liver, also called scarring. Liver damage is rated from Stage F1 to Stage F4, with F4 being the worst.

Genotype: The specific strain of the Hep C virus that you have. They are called 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. There are also subtypes (1a or 1b).

Hemoglobin: A protein that helps to transport oxygen in your red blood cells. When it gets low you may become short of breath.

Interferon: A naturally occurring chemical in the body that helps fight Hep C infection and protects cells from the Hep C virus. Synthetic interferon used to be a common Hep C treatment. It is no longer commonly used.

Platelets: Platelets are blood cells that help your blood to clot. A low count means the blood is not clotting enough. A high count means the blood may clot too much.

Ribavirin: An antiviral medication that when combined with other medications is effective at helping reduce or eliminate Hep C from the body.

RVR: Rapid virologic response, when you don't have any detectable virus in your bloodstream after four weeks of treatment.

SVR: Sustained virologic response, or cure, when you don't have any detectable virus in your bloodstream for more than 12 or 24 weeks after being treated for Hep C.



Ultrasound: An imaging technique that produces a picture of the liver. This picture gives an idea of the size and shape of the liver and can check for liver cancer.

Undetectable: When no virus can be found on a blood test.

Viral load: Refers to how many copies of the Hep C virus there are per one mL of blood. This may be anywhere from just a few copies to millions. Having a high viral load does not mean that you feel more sick.

Viral (RNA) test: Looks for live Hep C virus in your bloodstream. A positive test means you have Hep C.

White blood cell count: White blood cells help fight infections. A high or low cell count can indicate a medical problem.



© 2016 Pender Hepatitis C Support Society and CATIE (Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange). All rights reserved.

www.catie.ca 1-800-263-1638    @catieinfo

CATIE Ordering Centre No: ATI-70170
(aussi disponible en français, ATI-70171)

**PENDER HEP C
SUPPORT SOCIETY**



Canada's source for
HIV and hepatitis C
information

This publication, originally developed by the Pender Hepatitis C Support Society, has been updated and printed in partnership with CATIE.

Funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

DISCLAIMER

Information in this brochure is not medical advice. Decisions about treatment should always be made with the advice of a doctor who knows about Hep C. Treatment changes, so talk to a doctor to get the latest information. The opinions in this brochure may not be the views of CATIE, the Pender Hepatitis C Support Society, their partners or funders.

