

○ PAYING FOR TREATMENT

Hep C treatment is expensive. However, paying for treatment is becoming easier as more programs are available to more people to help pay for the medication, including publicly funded drug benefit programs, private health insurance and drug company programs. There are also programs run by the federal government for specific groups such as Inuit and First Nations people, people in the military, prisoners and people who got Hep C from a blood transfusion received between 1986 and 1990. A nurse or doctor can help you figure out if you qualify for treatment and if you can get financial support from any of these programs.



○ STAYING HEALTHY BEFORE AND AFTER TREATMENT

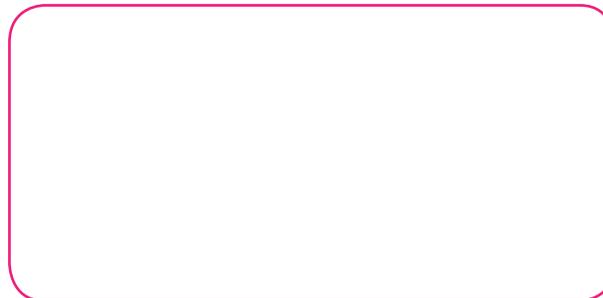
Sometimes it can take a while to get treatment. Learn more from your doctor or nurse about staying healthy while waiting for treatment.



After treatment, you need to continue to take care of your health and the health of your liver. This is true even if you are cured. Also, learn how to keep yourself and others safe from Hep C. Being cured doesn't protect you from getting Hep C again in the future. Go to www.catie.ca to learn more.



HEP C CAN BE CURED



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FSC Logo



Canada's source for
HIV and hepatitis C
information

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CATIE Ordering Centre No: ATI-70174
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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, its partners or funders. Information on safer drug use is not meant to promote the use or possession of illegal drugs.

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○ TREATMENT CAN CURE HEPATITIS C (HEP C)

New Hep C treatments are very effective at curing the infection. Everyone who has Hep C should talk to their doctor about their treatment options.

○ MEDICATIONS USED TO TREAT HEP C

Treatment options for Hep C have changed a lot in the last few years. New drugs, called direct acting antivirals (DAAs), are now available. They are in pill form and are easy to take. They have few side effects and are taken for only weeks. And they cure almost everyone. Research is ongoing and new drugs will keep being approved in Canada over the next couple of years.



The old treatment for Hep C, peg-interferon and ribavirin, was not very effective. Peg-interferon also caused bad side effects and is no longer used. Ribavirin is still added to some treatments.

○ PREPARING TO START AND STAY ON TREATMENT

Treatment for Hep C is still a big step to take. Talk to your doctor or nurse about these questions while you think about treatment: *(continue reading on inside panel)*

What genotype, or strain, of the virus do I have?

There are 6 different strains or genotypes of the Hep C virus. Genotype 1 is the most common in Canada. Most medications treat specific genotypes, while some can treat all genotypes. Your doctor will help you choose the best medication for your strain of Hep C.

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How much liver injury do I have?

Generally, the more liver injury you have, the sooner you should take treatment. Your doctor will be able to tell you more about your liver after ordering more tests.



Will I be able to follow the pill schedule?

It's important to stay on track with your pill taking. If you miss taking your Hep C pills, the medications may not work to cure you. And the virus may become resistant to treatment, meaning some drugs may not work as well if you need to be treated again.



Part of getting ready is setting up the supports you'll need to stick to treatment. Your doctor or nurse can help you.

What if I use street drugs?

People who use street drugs have the right to be offered Hep C treatment. It is possible for people who use drugs to take treatment and be cured of Hep C. Having social supports and a safe place to stay can help. Talk about your situation with a health worker you trust.



What if I am pregnant? What if I am planning to use my sperm or eggs to have a baby?

The Hep C drug ribavirin can cause severe birth defects and must not be taken during pregnancy, and both partners should not use ribavirin at least 6 months before trying to get pregnant. There is not a lot of information yet about the safety of newer treatments during pregnancy.



○ MORE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DOCTOR OR NURSE

- Do I have other health conditions that could affect my Hep C treatment?
- Will other medications or supplements, such as vitamins or herbal medicines, affect my treatment?

