

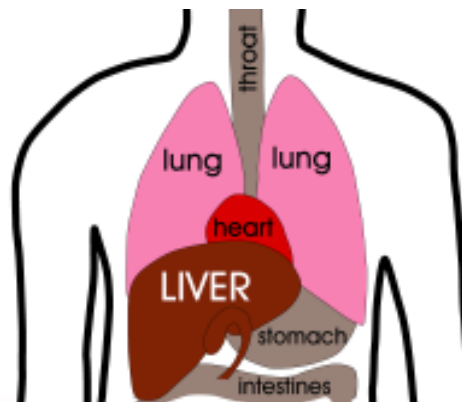
STEPS DRUGS & Prevention Hepatitis C

What does the liver do?

Your liver does over 500 jobs that you need to live. All the blood in your body must pass through the liver before reaching the rest of your body. If it is damaged you will get sick. If it stops working, you will die.

Your liver:

- o Uses protein from food to build muscles and hormones.
- o Turns sugar from food into energy for your body.
- o Stores and makes vitamins.
- o Filters out harmful chemicals and changes poisons (like drugs and alcohol) so they are less likely to hurt you.

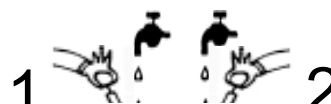


Drugs prescribed by doctors or bought over the counter (Tylenol, for example) can damage the liver as much as illegal drugs and alcohol.

The normal function of the liver is limited by damage from infection or chemicals. This can lead to inflammation of the liver (non-viral hepatitis) or liver failure.

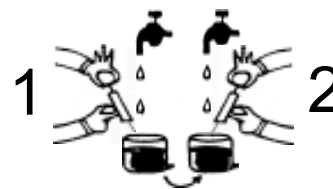
Safer Needle Use

Use your own needle, spoon, water and filter for every shot. If you do re-use any equipment, it is important to clean it with bleach (see diagram). This method should kill HIV, but probably won't kill Hepatitis B or C. To



any equipment, it is important to clean it with bleach (see diagram). This method should kill HIV, but probably won't kill Hepatitis B or C. To avoid these infections, follow steps 1 and 2, then take apart your rig completely and soak in bleach for 3 to 10 minutes. Follow by steps 5 and 6. Remember – cleaning with bleach is **not** as safe as using your own needle every time.

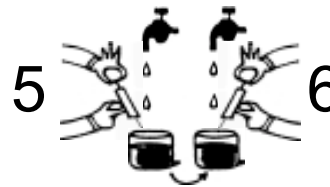
Many people experience serious skin, blood, heart and lung problems from injecting. This is because of dirt or bacteria injected beneath the skin or into the blood. Avoid problems by **washing** hands, **sterilizing** equipment and **cleaning** skin where you inject with an alcohol swab.



Draw cold water into syringe
Shake syringe for 30 seconds
Do this twice, using new water

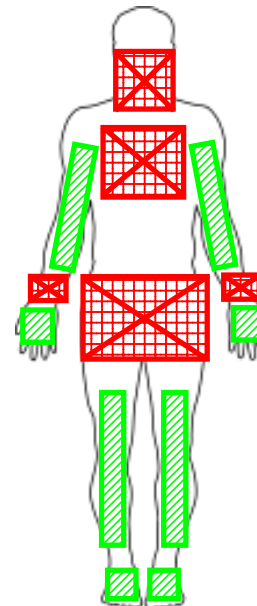


Draw pure bleach into syringe
Shake syringe for 30 seconds
Do this twice, using new bleach



Draw cold water into syringe
Shake syringe for 30 seconds
Do this twice, using new water

- o The safest places to inject are veins in arms, hands, legs and feet (see diagram: **Red is NO, Green is GO**).
- o Avoid injecting into the wrists, head or neck, breasts or groin area including the genitals. This can be very dangerous.
- o Rotate (switch) injection sites regularly to allow veins to heal and stop them from clotting and blocking.
- o Give your veins a holiday once in a while! Smoke, snort or eat your drugs instead.



Drug Injection Danger Signals



If you shoot up and have any of these symptoms, **seek medical help right away**.

- o fever, chills, dizziness;
- o ringing in the ears;
- o spots before the eyes;
- o red line streaking away from an injection site;



**DON'T
WAIT!**

- o ringing in the ears;
- o spots before the eyes;
- o red line streaking away from an injection site;
- o headaches, vomiting;
- o difficulty breathing.

What is 'Public Health' for?

The main job of public health is the prevention of illness. If you test positive for Hepatitis C, it is important that people who might get Hepatitis C from you be informed and tested. These people may include:

- o those you have shared drug equipment with;
- o household contacts;
- o sex partners.

You will be encouraged to tell your partners yourself. If you cannot, a public health nurse will tell them for you. This is confidential. **Your name will never be mentioned.**

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Sex, Drugs & Prevention

Remember – a germ is just a germ. Germs spread wherever and whenever they can. Injecting drugs can spread germs, but it **does not cause** Hepatitis C. Germs cause Hepatitis C.

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This pamphlet series was produced as part of the **Youth & STD Prevention** project, which started at Village Clinic in November 1997 and is currently housed at Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC). The writing and design of this pamphlet series has involved over 300 youth and 60 service providers. Funding for this pamphlet series was provided by Health Canada, the Winnipeg Foundation and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Thanks also to Kali Shiva AIDS Services.

Call SERC at 982-7800 for more information.

Questions Anyone?

These phone lines are there to help.

AIDS/STD InfoLine – 945-AIDS (2437)

(Outside Winnipeg 1-800-782-2437)

The Facts of Life Line – 947-9222

(Outside Winnipeg 1-800-432-1957)

Public Health STD Info Line – 940-2200

Klinik Crisis Line (24 hours) – 786-8686

Sex, Drugs & Prevention

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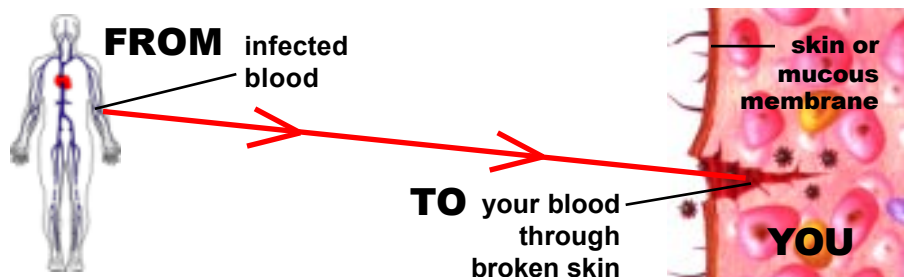
What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is an infection of the liver caused by a kind of germ called a virus. Hepatitis C is one of many viruses that can hurt your liver, including Hepatitis A, B and others. Unlike Hepatitis A and B, no vaccine is available to prevent Hepatitis C.

WHAT DOES THE LIVER DO?

How is it spread?

Hepatitis C spreads very easily when infected blood gets into your blood, through a break in your skin or mucous membrane (the 'skin' inside your mouth, vagina and rectum). Remember – skin can have tiny cuts or scrapes that you can't see or feel!



Hepatitis C is mostly spread when using equipment for injecting [*shooting up*] or snorting drugs that have been used by another person (including needles and syringes [*rigs*], spoons, water, filters, straws). **USE YOUR OWN.**

It is not clear at this time if Hepatitis C is spread through sexual contact. If you have a sexually transmitted infection (STI) such as chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes or genital warts, the barrier of your skin may be more open to infection by Hepatitis C.

Can it be prevented?

Yes it can. Prevention means reducing your risk of getting Hepatitis C. You can avoid coming into contact with the virus by:

- NOT using drug injection equipment that has been used by another person (including needles, syringes, water, filters, spoons).
- NOT using needles for tattooing or piercing that have been used by another person, unless sterilized.

SAFER NEEDLE USE



- (including needles, syringes, water, filters, spoons).
- NOT using needles for tattooing or piercing that have been used by another person, unless sterilized.
- NOT using straws for snorting drugs that have been used by another person.
- NOT using razors or toothbrushes of someone who has Hepatitis C. There may be traces of blood.
- NOT having unprotected anal or vaginal sex [*screwing or being screwed in the ass or pussy without a rubber*].

What are its symptoms?

Most people who are infected with Hepatitis C **never show symptoms**. Symptoms **MAY** show 5 to 20 weeks after infection, or not for many years. If they do show, they could include:

- Feeling tired and sick, having no energy.
- Not feeling like eating, throwing up, losing weight.
- Pain under the rib cage on your right side.
- Your urine [*pee*] might become dark-coloured and your stool [*shit*] might become light-coloured.
- Your skin and the whites of your eyes could turn yellow.

How can I tell if I have it?

Hepatitis C is diagnosed by a blood test. You might think about getting tested for Hepatitis C if:

- You have used drug injection or snorting equipment that has been used by another person, even once.
- You have used needles for tattooing or piercing that have been used by another person, without sterilizing.
- You have symptoms of Hepatitis C.
- A sex partner or drug-using partner tells you they have Hepatitis or symptoms of Hepatitis.
- Someone tells you that you have been in contact with Hepatitis C... or if you are worried about Hepatitis C.

Can it be treated?

Yes, it can. Eating well and reducing the amount of alcohol and drugs you take in will help keep the liver healthy. Anti-viral drugs may be prescribed to reduce liver damage.

If you have Hepatitis C, it is strongly recommended that you be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and B. These infections can be much more serious if you already have Hepatitis C. These vaccines are easy to get and free.

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Can it be cured?

No it can't. Most infected people (80-90%) become carriers of the virus. This means they can spread the virus for the rest of their lives. They are also at high risk for developing serious liver damage, which can lead to death. For a few infected people, the Hepatitis C virus goes away by itself.

What About HIV?

Hepatitis C and HIV are both passed through blood-to-blood contact. If you have one, you could have both. HIV is mostly spread through sharing drug injection equipment and unprotected anal or vaginal sex. If you test positive for Hepatitis C, you should also test for HIV.



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Where can I go?

Street Connections is Winnipeg's mobile needle exchange service. They offer clean needles and safely dispose of used ones.

- **Needle exchange van** operates from 6 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. It can be reached by cell at 981-0742.
- **Needles can also be exchanged** at 50 Argyle St. Call 943-6379 for hours.

You can get tested for Hepatitis, HIV and STDs at your doctor's office, or contact one of the health agencies below for confidential testing services:

- **Klinic** – 870 Portage Ave. – 784-4078 – Drop-in Teen Clinic every Saturday from 12 to 4 p.m.
- **Women's Health Clinic** – 419 Graham St. – 947-1517 – Drop-in Teen Clinic every Thursday from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. – **Boys welcome!**
- **Nor'West Coop** – 103-61 Tyndall Ave. – 633-5955 – Drop-in Teen Clinic every Wednesday from 1 to 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **Mount Carmel Clinic** – 886 Main St. – 582-2311 – Ask for "Triage".
- **Health Action Centre** – 425 Elgin St. – 947-1626 – Ask for a nurse.
- **Hope Centre** – 480 Alfred – 589-8354 – Drop-in HIV testing available.
- **St. James Walk-in Clinic** – 1600 Portage – 774-1868 – Open 'til 11 p.m. every day! Across the street from Polo Park.
- **Street Connections** – 50 Argyle St. – 943-6379 – Nurse available for women and transsexuals only.
- **Community Health Clinic** – 601 Aikins – 940-2025 – Call for appointment.
- **Village Clinic** – 705 Broadway Ave. – 940-6001 – Call for appointment.