

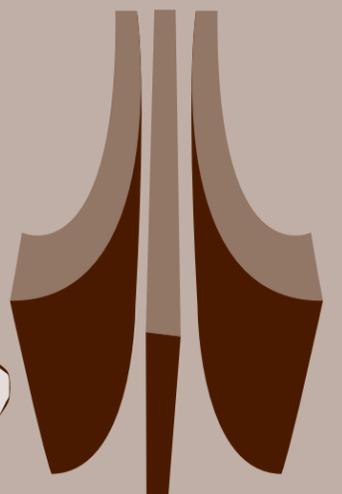
Visit [www.youthco.org](http://www.youthco.org) for more info on Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS

### Facts about Hepatitis C

- There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C
- Every year, approximately 5000 Canadians are infected
- Almost 70% of people who have the virus do not know they have it
- Approximately 1 out of every 100 Canadians is infected
- In some cases, Hepatitis C is curable with treatment



# Hepatitis C know the facts



## What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver  
*Hepat* (liver) + *itis* (inflammation) = *Hepatitis*

Viral hepatitis means there is a specific virus that is causing your liver to inflame (swell or become larger than normal)

## The Liver

- > is located on the right hand side, just under your ribs
- > cleans the blood
- > regulates hormones
- > helps with blood clotting
- > produces bile
- > produces important proteins
- > and much, much more
- > **the liver is essential for life!**

## Signs & Symptoms

- > **At first, some people may have these symptoms**
  - ☞ pale stool (poo)
  - ☞ jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)
- > **Some people may have one or more of the following symptoms, and some may not**
  - ☞ Tiredness
  - ☞ Nausea
  - ☞ Muscle or joint pain
  - ☞ Trouble sleeping
  - ☞ Loss of appetite
  - ☞ Weight loss
  - ☞ Abdominal pain
  - ☞ Itchiness
  - ☞ Depression
  - ☞ Dark Urine (pee)

Contact Information:  
 For more information about YouthCO, to book a workshop, training or theatre performance, or to order YouthCO's resources (stickers, posters, postcards, pamphlets and more!):



**YouthCO AIDS Society**  
 205 - 1104 Hornby St  
 Vancouver BC V6Z 1V8  
 † 604.688.1441  
 † 604.688.4932  
 support line 604.808.7209  
 www.youthco.org e information@youthco.org  
 toll free: 1.877.YOUTHCO

YouthCO is a non-profit organization working to involve youth ages 15 - 29 from all communities in addressing HIV/AIDS and related issues. We provide educational initiatives and support services to youth infected with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS and HIV/Hepatitis C (HCV). As a youth-driven agency, we provide outreach, prevention education, training, volunteer opportunities, advocacy and support to our peers.

Original Production of this document was made possible by financial contribution from:  
 Hepatitis C Division, Health Canada

The views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official policy of Health Canada

Your financial assistance helps us help youth!  
 YouthCO's charitable tax # 896707262RR0001

# Risk Activities

- ☞ **High Risk**
  - > Sharing drug equipment (needles, water, cookers, filters and/or ties)
  - > Sharing straws or bills for snorting
- ☞ **Medium Risk**
  - > Unprotected sex (vaginal or anal without a condom)
  - > Sharing body art equipment (including ink for tattooing)
  - > Sharing razors, toothbrushes and other household items
  - > Needle stick pokes or injuries
  - > Sharing crack pipes
- ☞ **Low Risk**
  - > Protected sex (vaginal or anal intercourse with a condom)
  - > Sharing joints

There is no risk of Hepatitis C through casual contact. ( See 'Myths about Hepatitis C' )

# What can I do to reduce my risk for Hepatitis C?

- ☞ Always make sure new & sterilized equipment is being used for body art (tattooing, piercing, scarring etc.) and acupuncture. *[Make sure the ink is not being reused for tattooing].*
- ☞ Never share toothbrushes, razors or any personal hygiene articles that could have blood on them (even tiny amounts).
- ☞ Practice safer sex. Use a latex or polyurethane condom for vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- ☞ Do not touch used needles without proper equipment.
- ☞ Never share drug equipment (straws and bills for snorting, needles, water, filters, cooker, tie). For the nearest needle exchange, contact YouthCO AIDS Society, or your local AIDS Service Organization (ASO).
- ☞ Wash your hands before using. Make sure the area where you are using is clean. Put this brochure or the inside, unused part of a newspaper on the table of surface.

# Myths about Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is *not* spread by casual contact like:



- ☞ **Sitting on a toilet seat**
- ☞ **Shaking Hands**
- ☞ **Sneezing /Coughing**
- ☞ **Hugging /Kissing**
- ☞ **Sharing eating utensils and drinking glasses**

# Viral Hepatitis

There are several types of Hepatitis viruses, don't get them confused. There are vaccines for Hepatitis A and B. **NO** vaccine exists for Hepatitis C. For more information about Hepatitis A and B, contact YouthCO or your doctor.



# You can live with Hepatitis C:

## 30 years or longer if you:

- > are young at the time of infection
- > are healthy at the time of infection
- > are female
- > access treatment

## 20 years or LESS if you:

- > drink alcohol
- > have other serious infections [HIV, Hepatitis B]
- > have a damaged liver before infection



# Dirty Needle Precautions

1. Handle only if you have proper equipment *[Sturdy pair of gloves, tongs or pliers and a puncture proof container (heavy plastic or metal)]*
2. Place needle in puncture proof container *[Do not touch needle with bare hands and do not try to recap needle if cap present]*
3. Can put container in garbage but better if it is taken to health clinic or needle exchange
4. If at school notify
  - > custodian, teacher, nurse or police liaison officer

# Needle Prick

*(If you are accidentally pricked by a needle)*

- ☞ Don't squeeze the prick site.
- ☞ Wash the area with soap and water.
- ☞ Go to the nearest emergency department and clinic for assessment and treatment.
- ☞ If possible, bring the needle with you (in a puncture proof container). *They may be able to test it for Hep C or HIV*