

Injecting
Drugs and
Having
Hepatitis C.
What Does
it Mean?



So I know Hep C is a virus that infects my liver, and is passed through blood, but how does having it change my life?

"I had to look at how much I was using. I decided to switch from coke to morphine because I could take better care of myself."

"I quit drinking. It's hard but I need to take care of my liver."

"I only drink beer now when I go on a drunk, no more hard stuff or other crap like mouthwash and aftershave. Sometimes I smoke pot instead."



"I make sure I filter really well when I'm using. I figure I should do whatever I can to stay healthier"

"I try to eat as healthy as I can, and listen to when my body tells me I need to eat and sleep."

I don't want my buddies to get it, how do I keep them safe?

"I make sure I keep my rigs separate and marked when we're using together"

"I keep telling people not to lend or share anything - rigs, water, spoons, filters, keep your own stuff."

"I was a tattooer when I was in the pen, I always told people to keep their own needle and ink and bring it back to get work done."



"I told my old man I want to use rubbers cause even if they say you usually don't get it that way, I don't want to get him sick, especially during my period."

"I know that screwing around a lot increases your chances of getting it."

"I use lots of lube - it keeps things slippery. Then it's safer."

What about cirrhosis? I thought only drinkers got that?

"I heard that when you've had Hep C for a long time, the body tries to fight it, and that makes scars in the liver. That's all that cirrhosis means."

"I ODeD the other day, and when I came to, the doc told me that the scarring of my liver (cirrhosis) made me OD on less drug cause my body couldn't clean it out."



"I know I need to take a break and slow down when I get really tired, and my eyes look a little yellow, my pee gets dark yellow, sometimes I even get pain on my right side. I think those are the times when my liver is sick so I need to slow it down to give it a break so my liver lasts longer."

"I go and get checked by the doctor if I don't feel right."

Drugs and my liver, what's the story?

Two things can be really hard on your liver - alcohol and Tylenol™. Alcohol wears down your liver over time. If you have Hep C the less booze you drink, the better.

Tylenol can damage your liver more if

- you take a big dose (like more than 6 pills)
- you take it over and over every day
- you take it with other drugs that are hard on your liver.

Ask your nurse or doctor about taking Tylenol™ or T3s or T4s. Another name for Tylenol is acetaminophen.

Some other drugs can be hard on your liver if you take too much or mix them together. Drugs like cocaine, crystal meth, Ts & Rs, and Darvon™ may cause a problem.

Certain drugs do not hurt the liver (but can cause problems in other parts of your body). Some of those are:

- Aspirin™
- Ativan™
- Mushrooms
- Codeine
- Morphine
- Caffeine
- Heroin
- Librium
- Immovane™ (Zopiclone)
- Cold medications EXCEPT Seldane™
- Secanol
- Tegretol™
- Mogadon™
- Gravol™
- Methadone
- Valium™
- Marijuana
- Chloral Hydrate

You can OD easier if your liver is sick. Check with a nurse, doctor or pharmacist about other drugs you might be on.

Remember:

- Check with a doctor, nurse, pharmacist or needle exchange about other drugs you may be on.
- Take prescriptions only the way the doctor or nurse says to
- You can OD easier with a sick liver
- All drugs do something to your body or brain. You can't always know what will happen, so take care.

"But when I get dope sick, I take a pile of T3s or T4s."

"Try and get something without Tylenol™ — too much can really screw up your liver."

"So what about liver cancer?"

"Only a few people get it. It usually takes a long time to get cancer. Stay as healthy as you can and see the doctor."

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