

# Hepatitis C Fact Sheet

## What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is an infection with the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV is usually transmitted through blood-to-blood contact. Hepatitis C can sometimes be passed on through unprotected vaginal, anal or oral intercourse as well as body to body contact.

A common way of catching HCV is through sharing needles when injecting recreational drugs - nearly 45% of intravenous drug users have contracted it this way. Similarly, having a tattoo or body piercing with equipment that has not been properly sterilised can lead to infection. Hepatitis C can be passed on through sharing toothbrushes and razors, and rarely from mother to baby during pregnancy and/ or birth.

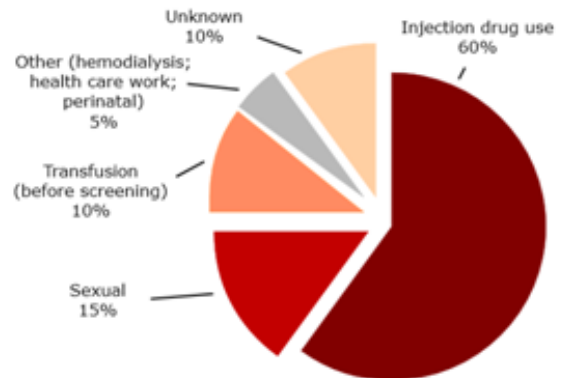
## What are the symptoms (if any)?

There are often no early symptoms for Hepatitis C, which is why it is important to get checked regularly if you have ever been at risk. Symptoms, if they occur, can include feeling tired, aching limbs, digestive problems and / or brain fog.

## How is it treated?

Hepatitis C can be treated with prescribed drugs from your specialist. This gives you the best chance to clear the virus from the body, which has been shown to be effective in 50-85% of cases as some strains or genotypes of the Hepatitis C virus are more likely to respond than others. Even if the virus is not completely cleared, the treatments can reduce inflammation and scarring of the liver.

You should abstain from sexual intercourse until your treatment is finished, and ensure that your sexual partners are also treated to avoid re-infecting each other[AM1].



*Pie-chart of way of transmitting Hepatitis C*

## What happens if you do not get treated?

About 20-30% of people with Hepatitis C will clear the virus from their bodies but may infect others during this period, but in about 75% of cases, the infection lasts for more than six months (chronic Hepatitis C). In these cases, the immune system has been unable to clear the virus and it will remain in the body long term unless medical treatment is given. About one in five people with chronic Hepatitis C develops cirrhosis of the liver within 20 years. Chronic Hepatitis C can also cause chronic inflammation of the liver (fibrosis) and may lead to liver cancer.

If Hepatitis C is left untreated, there is also an increased risk of getting other STIs, including HIV.

## Better2Know Testing Information

You should wait 10 days after any incident that you are concerned about before getting tested for Hepatitis C. We offer a number of different tests for Hepatitis C including tests to show if you have been infected in the past or are currently infected.

Better2Know's standard Hepatitis C test uses a blood sample for the test.

Better2Know is the leading private provider of Sexual Health testing services around the globe. We will get you a clinic appointment or home testing kit quickly and deliver fast and accurate results for your peace of mind. If you are concerned about your sexual health please visit our website [www.better2know.com](http://www.better2know.com) to book an appointment or purchase your test with us today.

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