

SHOULD I BE TESTED??

You should get tested for HCV if:

- You have a history of sharing injecting equipment or snorting drugs, including crack, even if only once.
- You had a blood transfusion or organ transplant before 1992
- You have had home or institutional tattoos or piercings through shared equipment.
- You have had multiple sex partners
- You have had an STI (sexually transmitted disease)
- You have been in prison

Where to get tested?

- Your family doctor or health care clinic can test for HCV.
- STI clinics can do anonymous testing for HCV.
- Your local HIV organization, or health care provider (nurse, CHR) can help you find a place to get tested.

LOWERING RISKS AND SUPPORTING

Lowering your Risk of HCV

- Avoid sharing any drug mixture or equipment
- Use condoms
- Avoid sharing personal hygiene equipment such as toothbrushes, razors, nail clippers
- Make sure tattooing is done at reputable location with sterile ink and equipment.

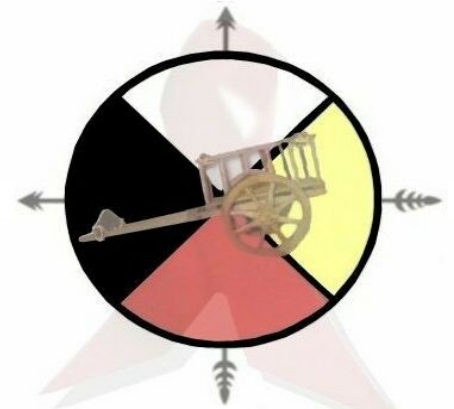
Helping others who are living with HCV

Some people with the disease face discrimination because of their illness. You can become knowledgeable about HCV, and how it is and is not transmitted. You can talk with people about what you have learned and share reliable information with others.

You cannot tell if someone has HCV by sight. They are the same person they were before HCV entered their bodies and lives.

SHINING MOUNTAINS LIVING COMMUNITY SERVICES

HCV AWARENESS



No One Is Immune

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What is HCV?

HCV is a virus that is passed on through contact with the blood of someone who is infected with HCV. It affects the liver, left untreated it can cause liver scarring and lead to liver cancer.

Who is at Risk for HCV?

Anyone sharing injection drug equipment or other drug use materials is at risk. Anyone sharing needles for tattooing or piercing is also at risk

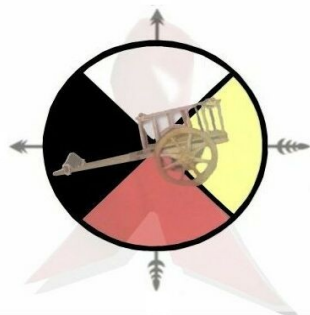
Youth under the age of 20 are most likely to share injection drug equipment. About 25% of Aboriginal youth report using injection drugs at least once.

How can I tell if I have HCV?

When you have just become infected with the hepatitis C virus, you may have no symptoms and may not even know you have been infected. Having a blood test done is the only way to be sure.

How it can be transmitted

- The most common way to get HCV is by sharing any injection drug equipment.
- In Canada up to 90% of people who inject drugs have Hep C. In Alberta, rates for Aboriginal people are 5.5 times higher than for Non-Aboriginal people.
- It is easier to transmit than HIV and is approximately 5 times more common than HIV.
- You can also get HCV by sharing tattoo needles, razors, toothbrushes, and nail clippers where there is a chance of contact with the blood of with someone who has HCV.
- Sharing dishes, cups and glasses is **not** a risk for Hep C.



**Nobody is
immune to
HCV.**

Services that can provide support and more information

- Community Health Rep.
- Canadian Liver Foundation-Toll free - 1 (888) 557-5516
- Hepatitis Clinic: Foothills Medical Centre (Calgary) (403) 944-6555
- Hepatitis Clinic: Queen Elizabeth II Hospital (Grande Prairie) (780) 832-4938
- Hepatitis Clinic: Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre (Red Deer) (403) 406-5503
- Hepatitis Support Program (HSP) (Edmonton) (780) 407-1650

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