

Hepatitis C - test, treat and cure

Infection Prevention

Information for Patients

Produced: May 2025

Review: May 2028

Leaflet number: 1617 Version: 1.1

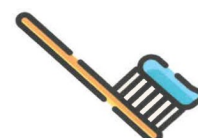
What is hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C, often called hep C, is a virus found in the blood. It affects the liver. It can be passed from one person to another through blood-to-blood contact.

How is hepatitis C transmitted?

In many countries, there are strict infection control and sterilisation guidelines which are followed. In some places where the standards are poor or equipment is re-used unsafely then there is a greater risk in spreading the hepatitis C infection. These include:

- Sharing personal hygiene items like razors and toothbrushes
- Tattooing or body piercing tools that have not been sterilised
- Blood transfusion before 1996 in UK
- Unprotected sex
- Dental treatment abroad
- Finger prick needles or other injecting items



**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Hepatitis C symptoms:

There are 2 stages: short-term (acute) and long-term (chronic)

1. In the early stage, 20% of people can get rid of the virus on their own. The other 80% go on to develop long-term (chronic) hepatitis C.
2. Long-term hepatitis C causes damage to the liver without any treatment. If infected, the symptoms of liver damage shown **below** appear. If hepatitis C is not treated it can lead to death.

Some symptoms may include:

- low energy
- fever
- feeling sick
- muscle aches
- yellowing of the skin

Had blood products before 1996

If you had blood transfusion, blood products or an organ transplant in the UK before 1996, there is a chance you may have been exposed to Hep C.

Hepatitis C Test at Home Kit :

Order your the free home test kit by visiting the website hepctest.nhs.uk or scan the QR code

The kit arrives in a discreet package to your address

Follow the instructions in the test kit

Place your blood sample in the pre-paid envelope and mail it to the laboratory

Within 2 weeks you will get your results online or by a text message



Helpful websites:

NHS Hepatitis C information www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-c

NHS Live Well, healthy tips www.nhs.uk/live-well

What are the different stages of liver disease?

The pictures below show the different stages of liver disease

If the test result is positive, the NHS will contact you to talk about treatments. Hepatitis C can be cured with a short course of tablets. The tablets have a 95% success rate with few side effects.

Hepatitis C can cause liver damage if it is not treated. Treatment can cure the infection in 8 to 16 weeks.



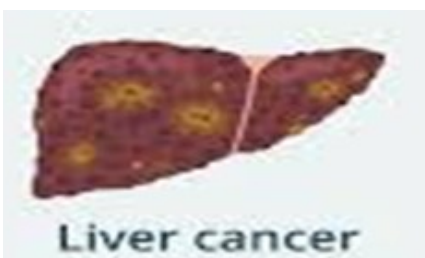
Long-term Hepatitis C causes damage to the liver if not treated. If infected you may only find out when the symptoms of liver damage appear. This can lead to liver cancer and death.



Long-term inflammation causes scar tissue around the liver and nearby blood vessels. The liver is still able to work normally.



The liver shrinks and becomes scarred and lumpy. The damage can become permanent. It can lead to liver failure (where your liver stops working properly) and liver cancer.



The most severe stage. It occurs after years of inflammation. The damage is permanent. It can lead to liver failure and death



Contact details:

For help and advice call the national helpline for support: 0207 0896 221 or contact your GP

Space for any notes:

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

જે તુમીં ઇંદ જાદવારી કિમે હેર બામ્મા વિંદ ચાહુંદે હે, ઝાં વિરખા વરહે હેઠાં હિંડે ગદે નંબર 'હે ટૈલીફોન વરહે।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

Previous reference:

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk