



Special Populations

Newly Diagnosed With Hepatitis C

It can be upsetting and overwhelming to find out that you have hepatitis C. You probably have many questions. Your mind may be churning, wondering how you got hep C, how serious it is or whether you could die from it.

Let's start with good news: Hepatitis C is curable and most people are [easily treated](#). Moreover, you are not alone. Millions of people in the United States and the world have hepatitis C. The fact that so many people have hepatitis C drives researchers to develop better medicines to treat it. Hep C treatment is so good that many believe that it's possible to eradicate hep C someday.

The fact that hep C is curable does not mean that you shouldn't take this disease seriously. The hepatitis C death rate and the incidence of [cirrhosis](#) are climbing. However, the fact that you know you have hep C works in your favor, because knowing means you can do something about it.

It can be scary at first, but with the help of your health care provider along with good information, support and a tincture of time, these fears will fade. What you don't know yet is that hepatitis C can teach you how to live better. It can act as a wake-up call, motivating many of us to take better care of our health.

So if you're newly diagnosed with hep C, take a deep breath, work closely with a health care provider and begin surrounding yourself with the support you need. Here is some basic information to help you get started on the road to health:

Establish a good relationship with your medical provider. Finding a good doctor is easier said than done. Sometimes it takes a few appointments before you know whether a medical provider is right for you.

Connect with others. Hepatitis C is more easily endured when done in the company of others also living with the disease. Research shows that support groups have multiple health benefits. There are many community-based and virtual hepatitis C groups, such as the [HEP Forums](#). You can also connect to others who understand what it is like to live with hep C by reading the [HEP Blogs](#) and [HEP Stories](#).

Find support. A friend or family member can be a great source of support when you are newly diagnosed. Consider choosing one or two people you think might best handle the news. Of course, it's not easy to predict exactly how people will respond—even if you've known them for years.

Sadly, [hepatitis C is stigmatized](#), and although stigma is wrong, it's best to be prepared to deal with it. Here are tips on [hep C disclosure](#). If you're not ready to tell anyone about your diagnosis, that's OK.

Get the facts. Hepatitis C is a big subject, and there is lots of information on it. HEP offers a full range of [hep C information](#). You can stay current by keeping up with the latest [hep C news](#), finding out about [events](#), and reading [HEP magazine](#).

Build health. Hepatitis C is a liver disease, and everything goes through your [liver](#), whether you eat it, drink it, breathe it or apply it to your skin. Before you eat something, ask yourself, "Is this good for my liver?" Question every [drug](#), [supplement](#) and food. [Don't drink alcohol](#), not even a little. If it is hard to stop drinking, get some help. Be sure you are up to date on all [immunizations](#). Don't forget that the liver connects to your entire body. Strive for [daily exercise](#), [healthy nutrition](#), good nightly sleep and other ways to improve your health.

Protect yourself and others. Hepatitis C [is transmitted](#) when the blood of an infected person passes into the blood of an uninfected person. Hep C is not passed by hugging, kissing or sharing food. Learn ways to [prevent passing hepatitis C](#) to others and how to keep yourself safe once you are cured.

Never give up hope. The majority of people who have hepatitis C can be cured. Even if you don't respond to your initial treatment, other [hep C medications](#) are available.

For more information on dealing with your hep C diagnosis, click [here](#).

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