



Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C Prevention

Unlike hepatitis A and B, there is no vaccine for hepatitis C, so the best ways to prevent hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and its complications are avoiding exposure, timely testing and prompt treatment.

Knowing your HCV status is the first step toward treatment and a cure, which eliminates the virus so you can't pass it on. [Guidelines recommend](#) that all adults should be tested for HCV least once, and those at ongoing risk should be tested regularly.

Here are some HCV prevention tips:

- Not injecting drugs would eliminate the most common route of HCV transmission. If you do inject drugs, use a new sterile syringe and other equipment every time. In addition to syringes, HCV can be transmitted via cookers, water and other injection supplies.
- Obtain new needles and supplies from a syringe exchange or distribution program.
- If you must share syringes, cleaning them thoroughly with bleach may reduce the risk of HCV transmission, but not as much as using new ones.
- Do not share non-injection drug equipment, such as straws or pipes.
- Do not share toothbrushes, razors or other personal care items that could have come in contact with blood.
- If you are considering a tattoo or body piercing, have it done by a reputable, licensed professional who follows hygiene procedures and uses sterile equipment.
- Condoms can reduce the risk of HCV transmission during sex, but they do not offer complete protection.
- If you have hepatitis C, cover any cuts or wounds. Clean blood on surface with a bleach solution or other effective disinfectant.

