



Common Co-Infections with Hepatitis C

April 25, 2018 By [Connie M. Welch](#)

Co infections with Hepatitis C can occur. It's important to understand what the common co-infections are in order to be tested and seek the necessary treatment for all conditions. The most common co-infections with Hepatitis C are Hepatitis B and/or HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).

HIV.gov states, "People with HIV infection in the United States are often affected by chronic viral hepatitis; about one-third are coinfecting with either [hepatitis B virus](#) (HBV) or [hepatitis C virus](#) (HCV). More people living with HIV are infected with HCV than with HBV. About 1 in 10 people living with HIV are coinfecting with HBV, and about 1 in 4 people are coinfecting with HCV."

Since many of the transmission risks are similar, it's important to be tested and understand how to treat Hepatitis C along with other co-infections. Though there are no vaccines for Hep C and HIV, all Hep C and HIV patients should be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B.

All patients who have been diagnosed with Hepatitis C need to be tested for Hepatitis A and B, along with talking to your doctor about any risk factors for HIV and be tested. Testing is proactive and can help save lives.

Patients with co infections should see a specialist who has expertise with co infections. When seeking a physician the patient needs to ask questions regarding testing to determine:

1. The condition of their liver (blood tests, MRI, liver biopsy/Fibroscan).
2. Blood work: genotype testing to determine virus strain, viral load to show viral activity.
3. Treatment
4. Transmission precautions that need to be taken.
5. What symptoms their experiencing.
6. If any other medical conditions they may have.
7. What medications, and all supplements they take.

It is possible that a Hep C patient can be infected with more than one genotype (virus strain) of Hep C at the same time. There are 7 known genotypes of Hep C with 6 being the most common. There are a variety of treatment options available for all genotypes.

For Hep C (HCV)/HIV, treatment for the Hepatitis C virus is available which cures Hep C in over 90% of patients living with HIV in 12 to 24 weeks.

According the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "In people with HIV/HCV

coinfection, HIV may cause chronic HCV to advance faster. Whether HCV causes HIV to advance faster is unclear.”

Treatment for both Hep C and HIV can be taken together but physicians carefully choose what treatment medications to use to avoid drug to drug interactions and monitor patients closely for any side effects.

For Hep C (HCV)/Hep B (HBV) patients, treatment for Hep C has a high cure rate for Hep C and may reduce liver damage if treatment is taken early. Early treatment is recommended. There is no treatment cure currently for Hep B but there is treatment to suppress the virus.

The Hepatitis B Foundation states, “The primary concern with HBV/HCV co-infection is that it can lead to more severe liver disease and an increased risk for progression to liver cancer (HCC).”

For Hep B(HBV)/HIV patients can receive treatment for both but Hep B treatment can delay or limit liver damage by suppressing the Hep B virus.

Early treatment for all co-infection patients is recommended due to increased risk of liver damage.

Have you experienced a Co-Infection to Hepatitis C, or been tested? We’d love to hear from you.

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