



# PUBLIC FACT SHEET

## HEPATITIS C

### What is hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a disease caused by a virus that infects the liver. Eighty percent (80%) of people infected with the virus have no symptoms.

### How is hepatitis C spread?

Hepatitis C may be spread through the following ways:

- Blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected. This can happen in many ways including:
  - Sharing needles with someone with hepatitis C
  - Having sex with someone with hepatitis C
  - Passed from an infected mother to her newborn infant during childbirth
  - Sharing toothbrushes or razors with someone with hepatitis C
  - Receiving blood or blood products from someone with hepatitis C. (Routine screening of blood products for hepatitis C did not begin in the US until July 1992)
  - Having long term kidney dialysis

### What are possible symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Yellow eyes or skin (jaundice)
- Extreme tiredness
- Dark urine
- Stomach ache
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting

### How is hepatitis C diagnosed?

By specific blood tests for hepatitis C.

### What is the treatment for hepatitis C?

There is no cure for hepatitis C. Over half of the people who are infected will have life-long hepatitis C infections. Of those with life-long infections, 70% will also develop additional long-term liver disease. Some patients may respond to treatment with certain drugs.

### How can hepatitis C be prevented?

- Avoid contact with blood and blood products
- Do not shoot drugs or share needles
- Do not share personal care items such as toothbrushes or razors
- If you are hepatitis C positive, do not donate blood or organs
- There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C.

### For more information on hepatitis C:

Ottawa County Health Department

[www.miOttawa.org](http://www.miOttawa.org)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/c/fact.htm>

Phone: (888) 246-2675

Michigan Department of Community Health

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Hepatitis\\_C\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_196974\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Hepatitis_C_Fact_Sheet_196974_7.pdf)

Medline Plus/National Institutes of Health

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000284.htm>