

Planned Parenthood Regina

Hep C

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by a virus people pass to each other through blood, but most people who have Hep C don't know it. If left untreated, Hep C can hurt your liver to the point where you need a transplant to survive. That's why you need to find out if you're at risk.

Risks & Symptoms

Hep C usually has no symptoms, which means people can make other people sick without even knowing it. For those who do experience symptoms, the most common are tiredness, abdominal pain and nausea. You might also experience loss of appetite, easy bruising, and yellowish eyes and skin, a condition called jaundice.

If someone has Hep C, it might be passed to another person through sexual intercourse or genital contact with another person (genital-to-genital or oral-to-genital) if there is contact with blood or open sores. Because Hep C is passed through the blood, the risks of transmission are greater if a woman has her period during sexual activity.

You get Hep C through contact with an infected person's blood. You're at higher risk of getting Hep C if you:

- Have had more than one sex partner in the last six months
- Have a history of STIs
- Inject or snort drugs, especially if you share needles, straws, pipes, spoons or cookers
- Are tattooed or pierced with unsterilized tools used on an infected person
- Get a needle stick from a needle used on an infected person
- Use an infected person's razor or toothbrush

Treatment

Get tested if you are at higher risk or think you may have been exposed to the Hep C virus!

To know whether or not you have Hep C, your family doctor can order a blood test. There is no vaccine for Hep C, but your doctor or other health care professional can discuss treatment options that can slow or stop the virus from damaging your liver.

Precautions

Lessen your chances of getting Hep C:

- Use a condom during sex
- Don't share drug gear (cleaning with bleach doesn't get rid of Hep C)
- Make sure your tattoos or body piercings are done with sterile tools
- Don't borrow toothbrushes or razors, or anything else that could have blood on it
- Wear gloves if you have to touch another person's blood

Common Questions

How can I avoid getting Hep C?

Transmission can happen during unprotected sexual contact if the sexual activity involves blood-to-blood contact. Ways to prevent Hep C infection include not having sex, delaying sexual activity and using condoms. Avoid sharing needles and other drug-related equipment and unsanitary piercing and tattoo techniques. Don't share razors, scissors, nail clippers or toothbrushes, either.

Can I get Hep C by sitting next to someone?

Hep C is not spread by casual contact like hugging, kissing or shaking hands, or by being around someone who is sneezing or coughing.

This is an informational handout only, if you have any questions or concerns contact PPR or your family doctor

Planned Parenthood Regina

THE SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION PLACE

1431 Victoria Avenue, Regina, SK T: 306 522 0902

www.plannedparenthoodregina.com

HOURS

Monday, Tuesday	9–12	1–5
Wednesday, Thursday	9–12	1–7:30
Friday	9–12	1–5
Saturday	1–5	