



What is Hepatitis C?

- An infection of the liver caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV)

What are symptoms that could occur?

- Some people do not have symptoms
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- More serious symptoms include fever, abdominal pain, dark urine, light colored stool and/or yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice)
- Headache
- Loss of appetite

How is it spread?

- Through contact with blood and blood products
- Sharing needles, blood transfusions, unprotected sex, occupational exposure and sharing personal care items
- Symptoms begin between two weeks to six months after exposure with an average of 6-9 weeks
- People are contagious one or more weeks before symptoms appear and while the virus is in their body

How is it diagnosed and treated?

- Primary care provider evaluation and laboratory testing
- There are treatment options. Please discuss these with your primary care provider.

How is it prevented?

- There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C
- Do not shoot drugs; if you shoot drugs, stop and get into a treatment program; if you can't stop, never share needles, syringes, water, or "works", and get vaccinated against hepatitis A & B
- Do not share personal care items such as razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers
- If you are a health care or public safety worker, get vaccinated against hepatitis B
- Ensure tattoos or body piercings are conducted at a licensed facility where training on blood borne diseases has occurred
- Use condoms during sex
- If you are HCV positive, do not donate blood, organs, or tissue

Are there complications?

- Up to 85% of cases are infected for longer than six months and become chronic carriers
- Chronic infection may be lifelong and the person is contagious to others for their lifetime
- Chronic Hepatitis C may lead to cirrhosis or liver cancer
- Mothers can pass it to infants at birth

Should the sick individual be isolated?

- No

Should facilities do special cleaning?

- Special cleaning is not necessary. Routine cleaning with EPA approved products is recommended

If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-1017