



HEPATITIS C FACT SHEET

WHAT IS HEPATITIS C?

Hepatitis C is an infection of the liver that results from the Hepatitis C virus. Acute Hepatitis C refers to the first several months after someone is infected. Unfortunately, most people who get infected are not able to clear the Hepatitis C virus and develop a chronic, or lifelong, infection

HOW DO YOU GET HEPATITIS C?

Hepatitis C is usually spread when blood from a person infected with the Hepatitis C virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. People can become infected by

- Sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs,
- Needle stick injuries in health care settings,
- Being born to a mother who has Hepatitis C.
- Less commonly, a person can get Hepatitis C by sharing personal care items such as razors or toothbrushes or by having sexual contact with a person infected with Hepatitis C.

SYMPTOMS

Approximately 70%–80% of people with acute Hepatitis C do not have any symptoms. Some people, however, can have mild to severe symptoms soon after being infected, including;

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-colored bowel movements
- Joint pain
- Jaundice (yellow color in the skin or eyes)

On average, symptoms appear 6-7 weeks after exposure, but many people infected do not develop symptoms.

TREATMENT

If acute hepatitis C is diagnosed, treatment does reduce the risk that acute hepatitis C will become a chronic infection. There are several medications available to treat chronic Hepatitis C. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- Never reuse or share syringes.
- Do not share toothbrushes, razors or other personal care articles.
- If you are a healthcare worker, always follow Standard Precautions and safely handle needles and other sharps.
- Consider the health risks if you are thinking about getting a tattoo or body piercing.

DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.