



## 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)

### TREATMENT

Hepatitis C can be cured with available treatments and can be successful if completed within a year of infection. This includes oral medications that are easy to take with few side effects and can be finished in just 8-12 weeks. Talk to your doctor right away if Hepatitis C is suspected and what treatment could be right for you.

### PREVENTION

Currently, there is no vaccine available to prevent Hepatitis C. The best way to prevent Hepatitis C is to avoid behaviors that can result in infection and disease spread. This includes safe needle practices with single-use needles, using latex condoms and dental dams the right way every time you have sex, and receiving tattoos and piercings from licensed and regulated shops and artists.

### DPHD EFFORTS:

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