

Treating hepatitis C the new, simpler way

New treatments for hepatitis became available on the PBS on 1 March 2016.

They provide many benefits over previous treatments including:

- a cure rate of 95 per cent
- a shorter period of treatment (8, 12 or 24 weeks)
- easier to use – less tablets, no injections
- fewer side effects
- more affordable through the PBS.

Until recently, treatment for hepatitis C could take as long as 6 to 12 months and could cause physical and psychological side effects.

Don't delay, get a blood test today

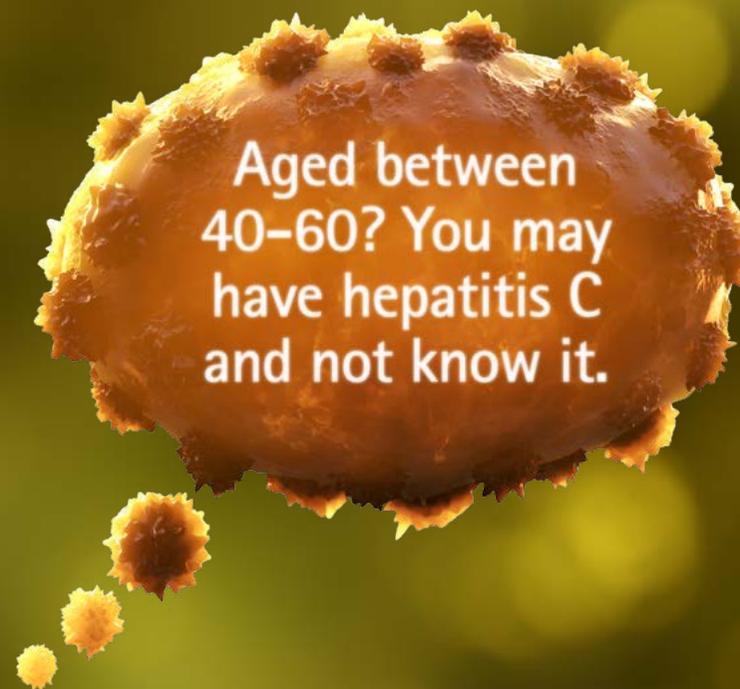
Having blood tests is the only way to tell if you are infected with the hepatitis C virus. Blood tests can also show if there is any damage to the liver. The first test is for antibodies, the second test looks for the virus itself.

If you are found to have contracted hepatitis C, your GP can prescribe these medicines in consultation with a medical specialist. Specialists can prescribe these medicines independently.

Visit your local GP to discuss if you should be tested and to organise blood tests.

Find out more

Talk to your GP or visit health.qld.gov.au/hepc



We need to talk.

Don't delay, get a blood test today.

Ever shared a razor? Had a blood transfusion before 1990? Or maybe you've had a dental or medical procedure in the developing world? Even if you've never injected drugs or had a backyard tattoo or home piercing, we need to talk.

Around 50,000 Australians are carriers of hepatitis C and don't even know it.

There are often no symptoms but, left untreated, it can cause cirrhosis, liver damage, cancer and even death.



You've now got a
95% chance
of being cured

It takes just a drop of blood to contract hepatitis C - but the good news is that thanks to the latest antiviral treatments available through your GP, there's a 95% chance of being cured.

Contracting Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is contracted through blood-to-blood contact with a person who has the virus.

The most common way to become infected is by sharing needles and syringes.

However, it can also be spread:

- by using contaminated tattooing or piercing equipment
- from a mother with hepatitis C to her newborn baby
- from sharing razors
- physical activity where blood-to-blood contact occurs.

Infection rates are slightly higher in some migrant groups who have contracted it before coming to Australia.

Cases of hepatitis C being contracted through blood transfusion prior to 1990 or in the developing world have also been reported. As have cases of it being contracted through medical and dental procedures prior to 1984 and in the developing world.

You cannot contract hepatitis C from activities such as touching and kissing or sharing plates, clothes, toilets or showers with someone who has the virus.

Why 40-60 year olds are at risk

Any activity that results in blood-to-blood contact with a person infected with the hepatitis C virus puts you at risk. As there are often no symptoms, you could have been infected many years ago without knowing it.

This may have occurred by:

- sharing a razor or other items that resulted in blood-to-blood contact with a person infected with the virus
- being exposed to the virus before medical and dental procedures became as stringent as they are today or being exposed to the virus in the developing world
- engaging in physical activity that involved blood-to-blood contact – such as combat sports
- having a blood transfusion prior to 1990 or in the developing world.

More than 300,000 Australians are thought to be infected with hepatitis C.
Around 50,000 don't even know they are carriers of the virus.
