

HEPATITIS C

WHAT IS HEPATITIS C?

Hepatitis C is an infectious disease that damages the liver. It is a blood-borne disease, which means it is spread when the blood of a person infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) enters the bloodstream of someone else.

HOW HEP C CAN BE TRANSMITTED



USE OF INJECTED DRUGS

The most common way in which Hep C is spread is through the sharing of tools that inject drugs.

CHILDBIRTH

A pregnant woman with Hep C has about a 4% chance of passing it to her child. The risk is increased in women with both Hep C and HIV.



MEDICAL FACILITY MISHAPS

It is rare, but Hep C can be spread in health care settings through needle injuries or when instruments are not sterilized after use. This is mostly a risk for health care workers, not patients.

SHARING OF RAZORS, TOOTHBRUSHES AND NAIL CLIPPERS

This is also rare, but Hep C can be spread when you share personal hygiene items that have come in contact with infected blood.



UNSTERILE BODY ART

Tattoos and piercings are typically safe at regulated parlors and salons. However, the use of unsterilized tools can lead to transmission.

BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS

Anyone who received a blood transfusion or organ transplant in the United States before 1992, when the blood supply began to be screened for HCV.



HOW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HEPATITIS C

1

Get help for drug addiction. If you inject recreational drugs, treatment programs are available to help you stop. But if you do not stop, never share needles or syringes with others.

2

Protect cuts and scratches. Dispose of bandages and other items containing blood, such as tampons and tissues.

3

Do not share your razor. That goes for nail clippers and toothbrushes too.

4

Practice safe sex. Condoms can help prevent Hep C from being spread to your partner. Use barrier methods if you have multiple partners, during menstruation or if either partner has genital sores.

5

Do not donate blood. If you have Hep C, you should not donate blood, semen or your organs.

6

Discuss your diagnosis with others. Your loved ones should know that you have Hep C so they can get tested and take their own steps toward prevention.

You can learn more by visiting
www.LaHHub.org