



HEPATITIS C BASICS

WHAT IS HCV (Hepatitis C Virus)?

- Spreads through blood-to-blood contact (blood-borne)
- Can cause both chronic or acute infection
- Causes serious disease of liver and other organs
- Major reason for liver cancer and liver transplant
- No vaccine and no 100% cure available yet
- Affects over 250,000 Canadians, many of whom do not yet know they have it; HCV is a 'silent killer'
- HCV spreads far more easily than HIV virus.
- There are several genotypes or 'strains' of HCV.

HCV TRANSMISSION

- Shared drug equipment such as needles and straws
- Tattooing or piercing with contaminated tools or ink
- Blood transfusion or blood products (pre-1992)
- Occasionally spread via rough sexual activity, childbirth, or contaminated medical/dental needles or tools

HCV SYMPTOMS (not everyone experiences them)

- Often no symptoms while damage occurs 'silently'
- Constant fatigue, weakness, aches, poor digestion, itching, forgetfulness, confusion, yellowed skin or eyes

HCV TREATMENT

- "Cocktail" of two or more drugs given over an extended period (usually several months) seems to be a cure for many, but side-effects are often severe, and treatment success is not guaranteed.
- Many new treatments are in development phase.
- Healthy food, exercise, rest, and avoiding alcohol or other substances that can stress the liver will help.



Photos: Milk Thistle, a traditional treatment for liver disease
Promising treatments are available now, and more will be on line soon.



Hepatitis C Education
and Prevention Society

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WHO IS AT SPECIAL RISK?

USERS OF RECREATIONAL DRUGS

- Even one-time use many decades ago is a risk factor.
- Shared straws, pipes, or needles can all spread HCV.

THOSE WITH TATTOOS, PIERCINGS, BRANDING

- Autoclaved tools and individually-sealed ink packages should be used during all body-art procedures.

IMMIGRANTS FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES

- Many, especially children, were infected with HCV during mass-vaccinations using shared needles.

BLOOD OR BLOOD-PRODUCT RECIPIENTS (PRE-1992)

- Some patients were not informed of procedures.

HEALTH-CARE WORKERS

- Needle-stick and other accidents can transmit HCV.

MULTIPLE SEX PARTNERS OR ROUGH SEX

- Hepatitis C is generally spread via blood, not semen.
- Damaging delicate tissues can be risky; use condoms.

IN DOUBT? GET TESTED!



A free or low-cost, confidential blood test is all you need. To request a "Hepatitis C test", contact:

- your doctor or local health unit
- your local Sexual Health society, street nurses, Street Clinic, or Youth Clinic



TO CONTACT HEPCBC

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Double face image contributed by Jade, created during August, 2011
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Working together, we can...



Confront hepatitis C

Hepatitis C-positive people and caregivers
Education, support, and prevention
Since 1996

HepCBC

What We Do, Who We Are



Hepatitis C Education
and Prevention Society

www.hepcbc.ca

WHAT SERVICES DOES HepCBC OFFER? AND WHY?

SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO

- have recently been diagnosed as HCV+;
- are going through treatment;
- are (pre- or post-) transplant liver recipients;
- have long-term, chronic, or advanced hepatitis C;
- are contemplating HCV treatment or research trial;
- want to discuss alternative treatments for chronic HCV such as diets, supplements, or exercise;
- have other health complications due to HCV;
- want to support a HCV+ friend or family member.



Community members support HepCBC's participation in the annual Victoria Day Parade

HEALTH PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Education and prevention activities include a lending library, a website, publications, outreach to prisons and schools, and presentations to community groups.
- Awareness and anti-stigma activities include parades, World Hepatitis Day memorials, and health fairs.
- Support activities include phone/email referrals, pamphlets for recently-diagnosed, and support groups.
- We partner with national and international groups.
- We provide patient and caregiver input to Canadian drug review and Pharmacare coverage process.

"Educating ourselves and others is the key to ending stigma."



POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY

- All services are provided for free.
- Preserving client confidentiality is a key goal. We understand HCV stigma and we respect that your HCV status, health, and contact information must only be disclosed by you, when you want to do it, and with no outside pressure.
- We strive to be respectful and non-judgemental while exploring differences in experiences and insights.
- Our concern is helping as many HCV+ people as possible, not dwelling on how they contracted it.
- We provide the most current research results about testing and treatment options. We want you to be able to make informed decisions according to your own unique circumstances.

HIGHLIGHTS OF HepCBC'S HISTORY

- 1996 -- HepCBC incorporated in British Columbia
- 2000 -- HepCBC took over monthly publication hepc.bull (published continually since 1996) and Peppermint Patti's FAQ's (updated regularly)
- 2001 -- HepCBC became a registered charity (#86800-4979-RR0001).
- 2002 -- Website at www.hepcbc.ca established

Pepper, whose owner died of hepatitis C, and Grasi, a Brazilian student volunteer



WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

VOLUNTEER TIME OR EXPERTISE

We have a variety of interesting volunteer positions available. Email or phone our office for information.

EDUCATE YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

-- Go to www.hepcbc.ca to learn more about HCV prevention, testing, treatment, and confronting stigma.

BECOME A MEMBER

To join, send \$10 cash or cheque to our office with: "Membership Request"

Include your Name, Mailing Address, Phone number and/or Email address.

Mailings include no reference to hepatitis on the envelope. You may request "email only". Members may vote at our AGM or run for the Board 30 days after joining.



University of Victoria student volunteers rehearsing play to educate teenage audiences about hepatitis C risks

IF YOU'RE ABLE TO DONATE MONEY

We are a small registered charity which struggles financially from month to month. We hope to re-open our office and re-hire a paid executive director someday soon, so gifts and bequests are greatly appreciated! Consult www.hepcbc.ca or phone 250-595-3892 for details. We provide registered charitable donation tax receipts.