



Living with hepatitis C.

The following guidelines are recommended following a positive diagnosis of Hepatitis C:

- ☛ Consult a doctor for follow-up care and advice.
- ☛ Avoid alcohol due to the damaging effect it has on the liver.
- ☛ Consult your doctor before taking any medications including over-the-counter, herbal, and other medications.
- ☛ Practice safe sex.
- ☛ Cover sores and rashes.
- ☛ Never allow anyone to share your toothbrush, razor, or other sharp instruments you have used.
- ☛ Avoid sharing chewing gum or pre-chewing food for babies.
- ☛ Household surfaces contaminated with your blood or body fluids should be cleaned with a diluted household bleach solution of 1 cup bleach to 10 cups of cold water.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH)

Local Resources

For information on Hepatitis C visit our website at:

<http://www.tulsa-health.org/community-health/epidemiology/>

or write:

Tulsa Health Department
Planning & Epidemiology
5051 S. 129th E. Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74134

Other Contact Information:

Phone: 918/595-4505

Fax: 918/595-4588

E-mail: epidemiology@tulsa-health.org

For additional information on Hepatitis C, visit:

- Oklahoma State Department of Health
(405) 271-4060
<http://www.health.state.ok.us/program/cdd/infec.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
(888) 443-7232
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis
- HCV Advocate
www.hcvadvocate.org



**TULSA HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**

Prepared by THD Planning & Epidemiology



Hepatitis C

There are approximately 35,000 new cases of Hepatitis C in the United States every year. About 85 percent of those infected develop chronic liver disease, while approximately 25 percent eventually develop scarring in the liver (cirrhosis). An estimated 10,000 – 15,000 people die from Hepatitis C each year. On average there are 300 cases of acute and chronic Hepatitis C each year in Tulsa County.

TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT

HEALTHY CHOICES. HEALTHY PEOPLE. HEALTHY COMMUNITY.



Hepatitis C



What is Hepatitis C?

- Hepatitis C (HCV) is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver.
- This infection can cause cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver and liver cancer.

Who is at risk?

- Anyone who had a transplant, blood transfusion, or received blood products prior to July 1992,
- Intravenous (IV) drug users, even if drug use only occurred once, and
- Patients with kidney disease who are required to undergo blood filtration (hemodialysis).

The risk of contracting HCV is increased:

1. If you have a sexually transmitted disease with rashes or sores, and
2. If you use infected objects such as:
 - Razors
 - Needles (tattooing, body piercing or acupuncture)
 - Toothbrushes
 - Nail files
 - Barber scissors



Other risk factors include:

- Frequent exposure to blood products;
- Exposure to blood in the workplace; and
- Higher risk sexual behavior (sex with multiple partners & sexually transmitted diseases).

How is hepatitis C spread?

- Occurs when blood from an infected person enters the body of a person who is not infected.
- HCV is also spread through sharing needles or “works” when “shooting” drugs, through needle sticks or sharps exposures on the job; or from an infected mother to her baby during birth.

What are the symptoms of hepatitis C?

Most people infected with hepatitis C do not have symptoms for years, even decades, following infection. If symptoms are present, they may appear as:

- Mild flu-like symptoms
- Dark urine
- Light-colored stools
- Jaundice (yellowish eyes and skin)
- Fatigue
- Fever



How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms, if present, may appear anywhere from 2 to 26 weeks after exposure.

The average incubation period (time from infection to the appearance of symptoms) is 7 to 9 weeks.

How serious is Hepatitis C?

HCV positive persons should be evaluated by their doctor for liver disease.

Some individuals with liver damage may develop scarring of the liver (cirrhosis) and liver failure over a period of years.

What are treatment options?

Currently, there are no vaccines or medications available for the **prevention** of Hepatitis C. There are, however, types of medication available for treatment of the disease. The success of these treatments varies with each patient.