



GROUP HEALTH CENTRE

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Ontario Hepatitis Nursing Program

What Is Hep C?

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- ~ Hepatitis C is the name that has been given to a virus that affects the liver.
- ~ When a person has the Hep C virus, the liver becomes inflamed or swollen.
- ~ This is why it is called hepatitis, because 'hepa' means liver and 'itis' means inflammation or swelling.
- ~ The swelling can cause damage to the liver and this can eventually interfere with normal liver functions.
- ~ Hep C is passed from one person to another when infected blood comes in contact with another person's blood.
- ~ Some people get rid of the Hep C Virus (*5-15 out of 100*) on their own.
- ~ Most people will have it for life unless they are successfully treated with drugs.
- ~ Everyone reacts differently to having Hep C. Many people have it for years without feeling sick, so they don't know that they have Hep C.
- ~ 10-20 people out of a hundred who have ongoing Hep C will develop liver disease (*cirrhosis*) within 20 years of becoming infected.
- ~ It is estimated that there are between 250,000 and 300,000 people in Canada who have Hep C. About 1/3rd don't know they have Hep C.
- ~ It is estimated that there are 4,000 new diagnoses of Hep C per year in Canada.

“Hepatitis C is a chronic liver disease that is manageable and treatable for most people. Educate yourself about Hepatitis C and access support systems. Explore if treatment will work for you. Abstain from alcohol.”
Colleen (cleared Hep C with drug treatment)

