



GROUP HEALTH CENTRE

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Ontario Hepatitis Nursing Program Who Needs to Know that You Have Hep C?

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Who needs to know?

- ~ Your sexual partner.
- ~ Any person who will be in contact with your blood.
- ~ You should tell healthcare professionals such as dentists, doctors and nurses, but you should also know that:

In the event of an emergency - all healthcare and emergency services providers (*paramedics, firefighters*) are trained to take precautions when handling blood or body fluids. This is called "universal precautions."

- ~ You don't need to tell anyone who is not at risk of getting Hep C from you.
- ~ You don't need to tell employers, fellow employees, neighbours, friends or even family members if you are not exposing them to your blood.

You may want to tell people who are close to you that you have Hep C even though they are not at risk for getting it from you.

- ~ You may feel that you shouldn't keep this from them and you may also want to have emotional support from the person.

It is not easy to tell someone that you have Hep C. Here are some tips for telling someone that you have Hep C:

- ~ You may want to plan this with a social worker, a nurse, a counselor, a doctor or someone else who can be objective and helpful.
- ~ Take your time before revealing that you have Hep C - be sure that you are emotionally ready to share this information.
- ~ Plan an appropriate time to tell the person.
- ~ Be sure you know about the real risks of passing on the Hep C virus.
- ~ Prepare yourself for the possible responses - many people respond with fear because they do not know enough about Hep C.
- ~ Once you tell them - you may not be the best person to explain things.
- ~ It is a good idea to provide written information about Hep C or refer them to someone who is knowledgeable about Hep C rather than trying to answer their questions by yourself (*trying to answer by yourself may make you feel defensive*).
- ~ It may be especially important for your sexual partner to talk to a professional who is knowledgeable about Hep C.

See the Hep C Resources section for references about Hep C and your legal obligations.

"You are not alone, so don't close in on yourself."

Ray (cleared Hep C with treatment)

