



*Is there protection
against hepatitis?*

How is hepatitis spread?


Hepatitis B and C



*What are the symptoms
of hepatitis?*

*How do I find out
if I've got it?*

*What help is there
for prisoners
with hepatitis?*



Hepatitis B and C are viruses that cause hepatitis infection. (There are also other kinds of hepatitis.)

Hepatitis stops the liver working properly.

If you have a hepatitis illness, the symptoms* may be:


- feeling sick and vomiting
- yellow skin or eyes (jaundice)
- dark urine (pee, mimi)
- pale faeces (poo, tūtae)
- feeling unwell, lack of energy
- not wanting to eat
- stomach upsets and pains
- fever
- general aches and pains.

Some people do not get ill when infected with the hepatitis viruses. Some people show no symptoms, but they may still be infected.

The most infectious time is from several weeks before someone is sick until several weeks – or even months – later.

A blood test will show whether someone has hepatitis B or C infection, or can spread the virus.

*Symptoms: things you notice when you are ill



The hepatitis B and C viruses can harm you and can be passed on to others.

If you are unwell with one or more of the symptoms, you should talk to a prison nurse.

If you think you have had contact with a person with hepatitis, you should talk to a prison nurse.

You can put in a health request form (health chit) to talk to a prison nurse.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is passed on through the blood and other body fluids* of an infected person.

It can be passed on through:

- contact with blood (and other fluids) from an infected person
- cuts, scratches, etc
- sharing toothbrushes, razors, towels, facecloths
- sharing needles used for skin piercing, tattooing and injecting
- sexual contact (vaginal, anal or oral sex) without condoms.

Some people are carriers of the hepatitis B virus. Carriers of the hepatitis B virus are not sick, but they can spread the disease.

*Body fluids: saliva/spit, semen/sperm, vaginal fluid, urine/pee, blood

Hepatitis B help

If you have hepatitis B or are a carrier of the virus:

- don't share toothbrushes, razors, facecloths, towels
- immediately cover cuts, scratches, etc
- don't share needles used for skin piercing, tattooing and injecting
- don't get tattoos or have your ears pierced
- don't donate blood
- don't have sexual contact when you are ill
- use condoms to help protect against hepatitis B and C (as well as HIV and other sexually transmitted infections)
- be careful about medication (check with a nurse about this)
- limit how much alcohol you drink (when you are released)
- ask your nurse if you need regular tests to look for liver disease
- ask your nurse about hepatitis A immunisation.

If you are a carrier of the virus, you should also tell your nurse that you are a carrier (they will make a note on your health file so the doctor and the dentist know).

You can ask the staff in the prison health centre for condoms.





Immunisation

Immunisation against hepatitis B gives protection from the virus. Immunisation means having three injections. It protects 95% of people.

People who have lived in the same house with an infected person should have a blood test.

Sexual contacts of an infected person should have a blood test.

Household and sexual contacts can have free hepatitis B immunisations (if they are not already immune).

Immunisation is no use to carriers of the hepatitis B virus.

Children and hepatitis B

New Zealand provides free immunisation for babies and children under 16 years old.

If you have children at home, find out if they are immunised. The children's doctor or Well Child provider can give more advice.

Talk to a health centre nurse if you are worried about hepatitis B. Put in a health request form (health chit) to see a nurse.





Hepatitis C (HCV)

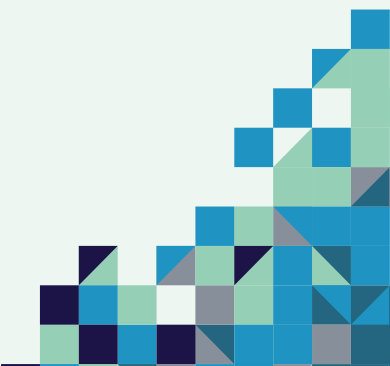
HCV is usually passed on through contact with the blood of an infected person.

It can be passed on through:

- injecting drugs or sharing injecting gear
- tattooing, ear piercing, body piercing (these may be a risk if equipment is not properly sterilised and free of germs)
- infection of cuts and scratches directly from an infected person's cuts and scratches – this is rare
- sexual intercourse – this is rare.

Some people are carriers of HCV.

Carriers of HCV are not sick, but they can spread the disease.



HCV help

If you have HCV or are a carrier:

- don't share toothbrushes, razors, facecloths, towels
- don't share needles or other injecting gear (you could re-infect yourself, as well as infect others)
- use condoms (you can ask the staff in the prison health centre for condoms)
- don't donate blood
- ask your nurse about:
 - alcohol harming your liver
 - infection risks during pregnancy and birth
 - treatment options
 - hepatitis B and hepatitis A immunisations.

There is no vaccine for immunisation against HCV (hepatitis C).

Talk to a health centre nurse if you are worried about HCV. Put in a health request form (health chit) to see a nurse.



Hepatitis help

General hygiene

- Wash your hands before eating.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet.
- Don't have any contact with people's blood.
- Don't share personal items or injecting gear.
- Use condoms.

Talk to a nurse about hepatitis.

This resource is based on information from the Ministry of Health resource *Hepatitis A B C*, April 2008.

New Zealand Government



DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS
ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA



June 2013. 06/2013. Code **DC1309**