

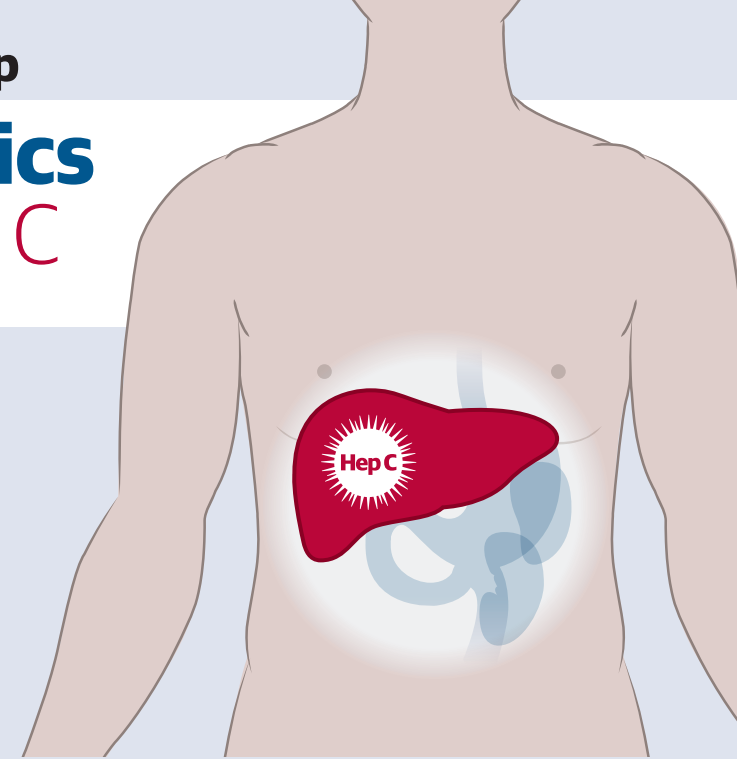
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This leaflet is produced by NAM, the HIV information charity, in collaboration with The Hepatitis C Trust and the Co-Infection Alliance. Thanks to staff and patients at the following organisations for their feedback. Royal Free Hospital, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, Royal London Hospital, St Thomas' Hospital, Royal Sussex County Hospital, Terrence Higgins Trust. Thanks to Janssen, Kevin Ryan and Wandsworth Oasis, each of whom provided part-funding towards the development of this leaflet. Our funders have had no editorial control of the content.



**nam** aidsmap

# The basics Hepatitis C



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## Notes

## Want to find out more?

### For more information on this topic:

- read our 'Hepatitis C treatment', 'How hepatitis C is passed on' and 'How hepatitis C is passed on during sex' leaflets;
- visit the Hepatitis C Trust website at [www.hepctrust.org.uk](http://www.hepctrust.org.uk);
- visit the Co-Infection Alliance website at [www.co-infectionalliance.org](http://www.co-infectionalliance.org);
- phone the Hepatitis C Trust Helpline on 0845 223 4424; or
- speak to an adviser at THT Direct (phone: 0808 802 1221).

### For more information about HIV

You can get free fact sheets, booklets, email bulletins and a newsletter from our website at [www.aidsmap.com/resources](http://www.aidsmap.com/resources). You can get answers to common questions at [www.aidsmap.com/hiv-basics](http://www.aidsmap.com/hiv-basics) and find local services at [www.aidsmap.com/e-atlas](http://www.aidsmap.com/e-atlas).

**Contact us** by calling 020 3242 0820 or by sending an email to [info@nam.org.uk](mailto:info@nam.org.uk)

### Has this resource been useful to you?

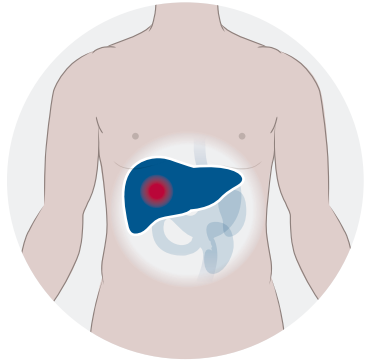
Please let us know what you think by visiting our website at [www.aidsmap.com/feedback](http://www.aidsmap.com/feedback), phoning us or sending an email to [info@nam.org.uk](mailto:info@nam.org.uk). Your feedback helps us to improve the services we offer you.

You can contact us to find out more about the scientific research and information we have used to produce this leaflet.

**We recommend that you discuss the information in this leaflet with a doctor or other health worker.**

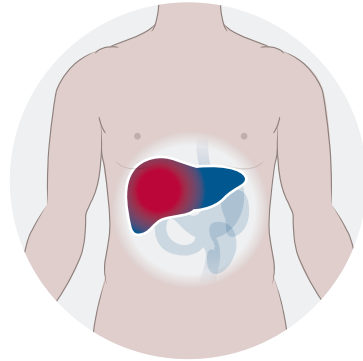
# Hepatitis C is a serious infection caused by a virus. It damages the liver, which performs essential functions in the body.

- 1** The first six months of having hepatitis C are called 'acute infection'. Most people don't notice any symptoms.



During this time, the body can sometimes **get rid of the virus on its own**. In this case, treatment wouldn't be needed.

- 2** If you have had hepatitis C for **more than six months**, this is called 'chronic infection'.

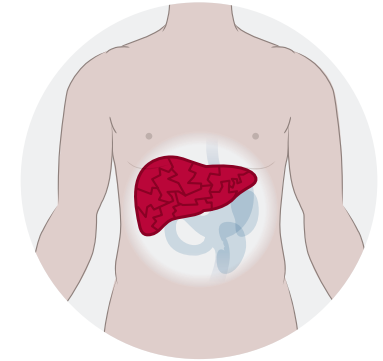


**You may not notice any symptoms** for several years as hepatitis C develops slowly.

- 3** You can reduce damage to your liver by **avoiding alcohol and recreational drugs**.

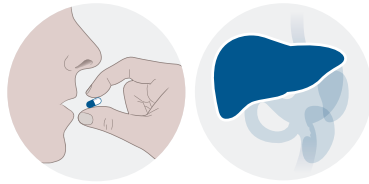


- 4** When your **liver is damaged** it becomes hard and scarred. This can make you feel unwell.

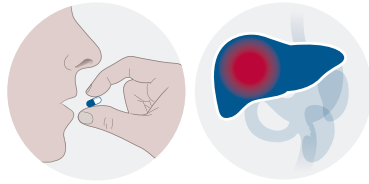


Moderate scarring is called 'fibrosis'. More serious scarring is called 'cirrhosis'.

- 5** The aim of treatment is to **cure you** of hepatitis C. You usually need to take it for 6, 12 or 18 months.



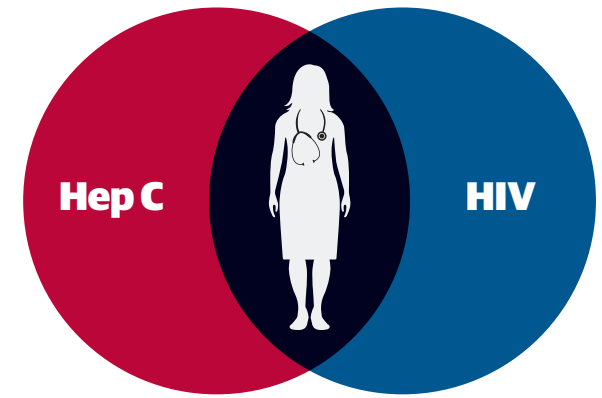
But hepatitis C treatment **doesn't work for everybody**.



- 6** **New, better drugs** are being developed and are starting to be used.



- 7** Having HIV makes hepatitis C more serious and harder to treat. Make sure your doctors are **experienced in treating HIV and hepatitis C together**.



## Important points

- Hepatitis C is a serious infection which damages the liver.
- Some people have hepatitis C for many years without feeling unwell or having any symptoms.
- If hepatitis C treatment works, it will cure you of hepatitis C.