

**NAM**  
77a Tradescant Road  
London SW8 1XJ  
**Phone:** 020 3242 0820  
**Website:** www.aidsmap.com  
**E-mail:** info@nam.org.uk  
**Charity number:** 1011220

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.



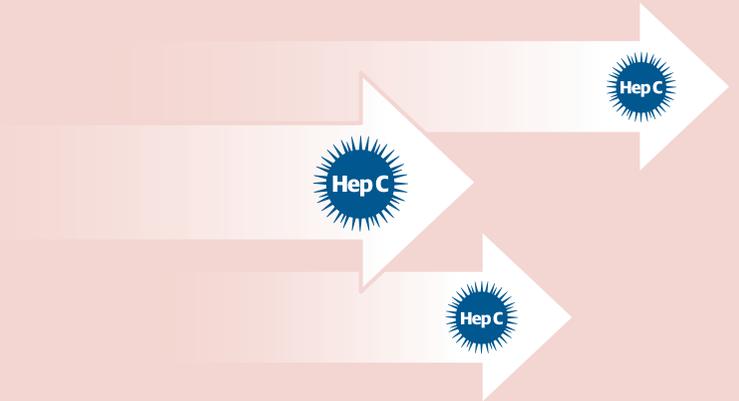
# The basics

## How hepatitis C is passed on

You can view a large-format version of this leaflet on your computer. Call us on 020 3242 0820.



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### Notes

The hepatitis C virus can live outside the body for longer than HIV and is more likely to be passed on.

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### Want to find out more?

**For more information on this topic:**

- read our 'Hepatitis C', 'Hepatitis C treatment' 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 liver infection. It is passed from person to person in the following ways.

## Sharing equipment for injecting drugs



- This includes syringes, needles, water, spoons and mixing containers, filters and swabs.

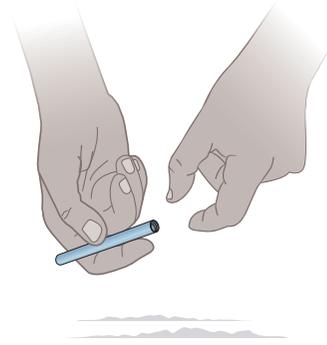


- There's a risk when injecting crystal meth, anabolic steroids, heroin, crack cocaine or any other drug.



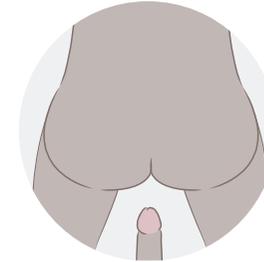
- Always use your own equipment. Don't share, lend or borrow equipment.

## Sharing straws or banknotes to snort drugs



- It's safer for each person to use a different straw or roll of paper.

## During sex



- This mostly affects gay men. There's more information in another leaflet in this series.

## From mother to child during pregnancy or childbirth.



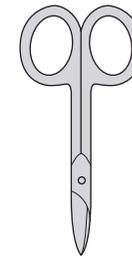
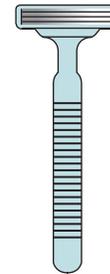
From medical procedures and **blood transfusions** carried out in some poorer countries or in the UK more than 20 years ago.



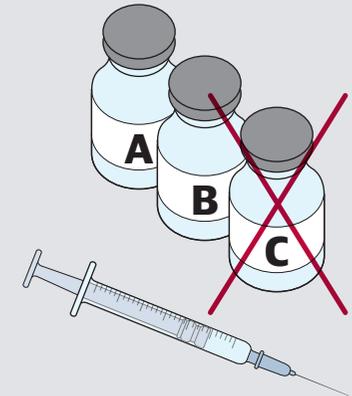
**Tattooing or piercing**, if equipment is not sterilised properly.



**Sharing** razors, toothbrushes, nail scissors and other items that could cause bleeding.



Unlike hepatitis A and hepatitis B, there is **no vaccine** against hepatitis C.



## Important points

- When the blood of a person who has hepatitis C enters the bloodstream of another person, that person could get hepatitis C.
- Tiny and unseen traces of blood can lead to hepatitis C infection.
- To avoid infection, don't share or re-use objects which could have been in contact with another person's blood.