

## HEPATITIS C FACT SHEET

### What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a contagious liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus. It is the most common bloodborne infection in the United States.

### What are the symptoms of Hepatitis C?

People with hepatitis C may not show any symptoms, or the symptoms may be so mild that they are not noticeable. Among those that do experience symptoms they may include:

- Jaundice, fatigue, anorexia, nausea, or vomiting.
- Abdominal pain, muscle/joint aches
- Yellow color of the skin or white part of the eyes
- Diarrhea or light colored stool

### Who can get Hepatitis C?

Anyone can get Hepatitis C, but there are certain groups that are at a high risk of infection. People at high risk for Hepatitis C are injection drug users, anyone who had a blood transfusion before July 1992, those with body tattoos, and those with multiple sex partners.

### How is Hepatitis C spread?

- Hepatitis C virus can enter the body through blood-to-blood contact, which occurs when an infected person's blood comes into contact with a non-infected person's blood in the non-infected person's body.
- Hepatitis C is usually spread by sharing needles among injection drug use, or passed from mother to child during childbirth.
- People may also get hepatitis C from sexual contact with an infected person or improperly sterilized medical, acupuncture, piercing, or tattooing equipment.
- Hepatitis C can spread through blood transfusions, however since reliable blood tests for the hepatitis C virus have become available, it is very unlikely for this to be the source of the infection.

### What is the treatment for Hepatitis C?

Combination therapy may be an effective form of treatment, but it is important to consult a doctor for medical advice regarding treatment.

### How is Hepatitis C Infection prevented?

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C, but there are other ways to reduce your risk:

- Do not inject drugs. If you do inject drugs do not share needles, syringes, or water.
- Do not share personal care items like razors or toothbrushes that might have blood on them.
- Use latex condoms when having sex, and limit number of sexual partners.
- If you are thinking about getting a tattoo, body piercing, or acupuncture, make sure the instruments being used are sterilized.

For more information please contact Contra Costa Public Health at 925-313-6740 and visit our website at <http://cchealth.org/cd/>

Additional information may be found at the following links:

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/C/cFAQ.htm>

[http://cchealth.org/aids/pdf/hep\\_c\\_resources.pdf](http://cchealth.org/aids/pdf/hep_c_resources.pdf)