

# Hepatitis C Virus: Quick Facts

- Hepatitis C is caused by a virus carried in the blood. It attacks the liver.
- The virus is passed by blood-to-blood contact.
- A person might not have symptoms for many years. By that time the liver damage could be serious.
- You can get Hep C from:
  - sharing needles, pipes, straws, cookers, filters, ties, or water for drug use with anyone else, including sexual partners.
  - piercing or tattooing equipment (including ink) already used on someone else.
- You can also get Hep C from:
  - anything that might have blood on it, like razors, nail clippers and toothbrushes already used by someone else, even if the blood is not visible.
  - having unprotected sex with someone who has Hep C.
  - reusing medical equipment that was not properly sterilized (such as a scalpel) or reusing needles for medical injections.
- There is more than one type of test for Hep C:
  - Antibody test - indicates if the individual has ever had contact with the Hep C virus in the past.
  - RNA test – indicates if there is active virus in the body, how much is there, and what kind it is. This test assists in diagnosing active infection.
- It is important to encourage people to return for their test results at all stages of testing.
- There is treatment available for Hep C.
- The HNHU is urging health care providers to begin recommending a one-time blood test for all adults born between 1945 and 1975.
- Many baby boomers got infected before the dangers of hepatitis C were well known.
- Although anyone can get hepatitis C, baby boomers are five times more likely to be infected by hepatitis C.

## Helpful Resources:

For patient resources, please visit [www.hnhu.org/infectiousdiseases](http://www.hnhu.org/infectiousdiseases) and [www.hepcinfo.ca](http://www.hepcinfo.ca)

## References:

Canadian Liver Foundation [www.liver.ca](http://www.liver.ca)

CDC Vital signs: hepatitis C (May 2013) <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/hepatitis/>

[www.hepcinfo.ca](http://www.hepcinfo.ca)



## STI Testing & Treatment Guidelines

With the recent changes made to the treatment of Gonorrhea (GC), a quick overview of STI testing and treatment will be provided below.

Sexually Transmitted Infection	Test	Treatment
Chlamydia (CT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urine</li> <li>• Urethral/cervical swab</li> </ul> <p>*Penile and vaginal swabs are not the preferred method of detection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Azithromycin 1 g PO in a single dose (for both non pregnant and pregnant women) Best for poor compliance</li> <li>• Doxycycline 100 mg PO bid x 7 days (NOT recommended for pregnant women)</li> <li>• Second line for pregnant cases: Amoxicillin 500 mg PO tid x 7 days</li> </ul>
Gonorrhea (GC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urine</li> <li>• Urethral/cervical swab</li> </ul> <p>*Penile and vaginal swabs are not the preferred method of detection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceftriaxone 250 mg IM stat x Azithromycin 1 g PO</li> </ul> <p>Alternate therapy (2nd line)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cefixime 400 mg PO stat + Azithromycin 1 g PO</li> </ul>

Reference: Public Health Agency of Canada. (2008). Canadian guidelines on sexually transmitted infections.

Public Health Ontario. (2013). Guidelines for testing and treatment of gonorrhoea in Ontario: Quick reference guide. Retrieved from [http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Guidelines\\_Gonorrhoea\\_Ontario\\_Guide\\_2013.pdf](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Guidelines_Gonorrhoea_Ontario_Guide_2013.pdf)

**\*\* Reminder that these drugs Azithromycin, Ceftriaxone, and Cefixime (Suprax) can be ordered at the bottom of your vaccine order form for free from the H-N Health Unit.**

You will find an updated STI Treatment Guidelines reference sheet for your office within your newsletter package. Please replace any other STI Treatment Guidelines you would have received from the health unit. Thank you!

## Immunizations

Immunizations are one of the best preventative measures our clients can take to protect themselves from vaccine preventable diseases. We commonly see outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases today and want to make sure our communities are protected through herd immunity. Most recently, we have received reports of a confirmed Measles case in Halton Region and a Provincial Pertussis outbreak has just ended, which H-N had confirmed cases. Living in a rural community that is rich in agriculture, tetanus can be easily acquired through minor scrapes or punctures in the skin contacting contaminated soil or objects. These are all preventable diseases and our clients need to be aware of the risks associated with not receiving the vaccine as well as the encouragement to remain up to date with their immunizations. We thank you for working in collaboration to ensure our community remains safe and healthy.

Check out what the Health Unit has been up to over the last year by reviewing H-N Health Unit's annual report [http://www.hnhu.org/images/stories/reports/HNHSS\\_dept\\_annual\\_2012-web.pdf](http://www.hnhu.org/images/stories/reports/HNHSS_dept_annual_2012-web.pdf)



**HealthUnit**  
Haldimand-Norfolk  
[www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org) • [info@hnhu.org](mailto:info@hnhu.org)

Simcoe:  
P.O. Box 247,  
12 Gilbertson Dr.,  
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L1  
519-426-6170 or 905.318.6623

Caledonia:  
282 Argyle St. S,  
Caledonia, ON N3W 1K7  
905.318.5367

