

CDRS

Communicable Disease Reporting System

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET

HEPATITIS C

Hepatitis C is a viral disease that affects your liver and can cause chronic liver disease. Almost four million people in the U.S have been infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV.)

Symptoms

- Usually there are no symptoms or they may be very mild
- Even without symptoms, a person can infect others without knowing it
- Once symptoms do occur, a person may have extreme fatigue, cirrhosis of the liver, liver cancer, or liver failure

Transmission

Hepatitis C is mainly spread through blood. This might happen by:

- Receiving blood transfusion, organ transplants or blood products before screening procedures were in place
- Using IV drugs, sharing needles and syringes
- Receiving long-term kidney dialysis
- Working in an environment where you are exposed to blood, such as healthcare, EMS

Treatment

- Talk to your doctor about treatments for HCV
- Get immunized against Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B
- Ask your doctor about tests to monitor your liver function
- Do not take medications (including over-the-counter medicines like acetaminophen) unless your doctor says it's OK
- Avoid drinking alcohol and stop smoking. Both alcohol and nicotine damage liver cells
- Eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet

Prevention

To protect others from getting HCV, follow these common sense rules:

- Do not share personal hygiene items that could have blood on them, such as razors or toothbrushes
- Use a condom during sex
- Clean up blood spills with diluted household bleach (1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart water)
- Cover open cuts with Band-aids.
- Ask your doctor before donating blood, body organs, or other body tissue
- Do not share drug needles or cocaine straws with anyone

Additional Information

Who should get tested?

- IV drug users
- Persons who have received blood transfusions before 1987
- Health care workers who have been exposed to blood from a person with Hepatitis C
- A person whose mother had Hepatitis C when he/she was born
- A person who has been on long-term kidney dialysis

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Franklin County



Board of Health

Report Disease With Ease - 24 hours a day

www.cdrsinfo.com

Columbus and Franklin County Communicable Disease Reporting System

c/o The Franklin County Board of Health, 280 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43215

(614) 719-8888 ♦ (614) 719-8890 fax ♦ cdrs@franklincountyohio.gov - email

