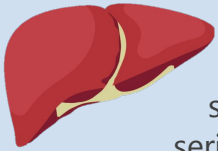


## WHAT IS HEPATITIS C?

Hepatitis C is one of five Hepatitis viruses (Hepatitis A through E), all of which attack the liver. Hepatitis can cause liver stiffening, cancer and, eventually, failure.

## WHY IS HEPATITIS C DANGEROUS?

The liver is an important organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and breaks down toxins.



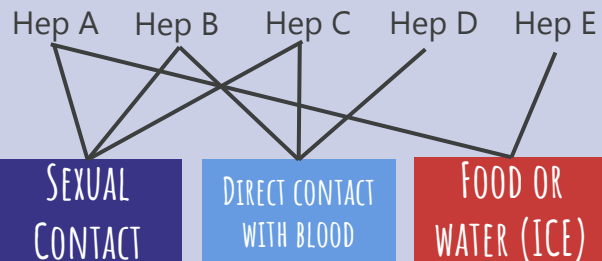
By the time signs of liver damage start to show up, the liver will be seriously damaged. So, it is very important to test for Hepatitis C before you have a reason to suspect you have it.

## TESTING FOR HEPATITIS C

Because Hepatitis C lives in the blood stream, we test for it using blood-based tests. This can be a full blood draw, finger-poke rapid test or dried blood spot testing.

It is important to test for Hepatitis as early as possible, so that the virus has less time to damage your liver.

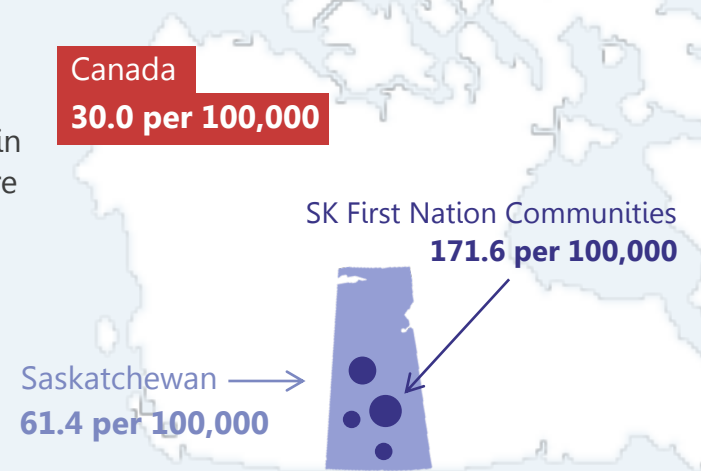
## HOW DO YOU GET HEPATITIS?



## MYTH #1: HEP C ISN'T VERY COMMON

Hepatitis C is surprisingly common, especially in Saskatchewan where the rates of Hepatitis C are nearly **DOUBLE** the national average.

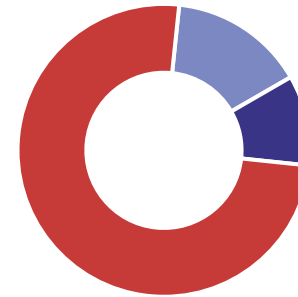
Hepatitis C is fairly common in Canada and especially in Saskatchewan. About 1% of the Canadian population has had Hep C and about 704 people in SK have Hep C right now.



## MYTH #2: MOST PEOPLE WITH HEP C CAN GET RID OF IT WITHOUT MEDICATION

Some people can get rid of Hepatitis C without medication, but by no means "most" people.

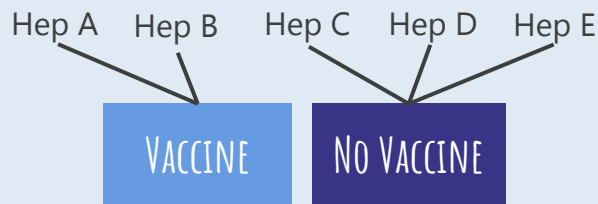
About 1 in 4 people (or less) have strong immune systems that fight off the virus. In the other 3 of 4 people, Hepatitis C cannot be fought off and causes chronic infection.



People with HIV have weakened immune systems and are, therefore, less likely to be able to fight off Hepatitis C than people without HIV. This is extra dangerous as Hepatitis C and HIV can be acquired through many of the same activities (like unprotected sex and injection drug use). People with HIV and Hepatitis C can experience liver failure faster than those without HIV.

## MYTH #3: THERE IS A VACCINE FOR HEPATITIS C

This one is easy to be confused about because there are vaccines for Hepatitis A and B, but NOT for Hepatitis C. Hep C is more variable than Hep A and B, which is why it's difficult to make a vaccine for it.



While there isn't a vaccine for Hepatitis C, there is a cure for it!

BEFORE 2011

A treatment called interferons were used to treat Hepatitis C. People who were treated using these reported feeling like they had gone through chemotherapy and it only worked in about 50% of patients.

NOW

Antivirals, that have little to no side effects, are now used to treat Hep C. These have a 95% chance of curing the patient of Hep C!





## MYTH #4 YOU CAN'T GET HEP C MORE THAN ONCE

**IMMUNITY** Immunity is when you build up antibodies against an infection and these antibodies fight off the infection.

**VARIABILITY** Because of the differences between individual Hepatitis C viruses, you cannot build up an immunity to it.

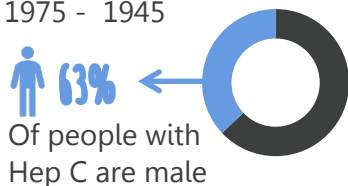
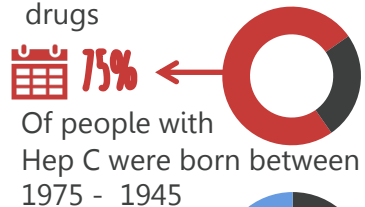
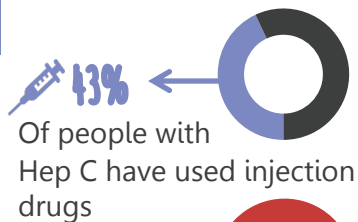
**REINFECTION** This means that even though you have been treated or maybe even fought off Hep C once, your body won't remember how to fight it off the next time and you will have a Hep C infection again.

### PREVENTING REINFECTION

-  Don't share needles for drugs or tattoos/piercings
-  Use condoms if you are having sex with someone who may have Hep C
-  Don't share any personal hygiene items
-  Don't share any items used to take drugs especially those with blood on them

## MYTH #5 I DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HEPATITIS C

Hepatitis C is sneaky and can have been passed to you when you least expect it. Maybe you tried intravenous drugs once back in the 70's or maybe you had a blood transfusion before 1990 – these activities can have passed Hepatitis C to you.



## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON HIV?

**CATIE**  
Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange  
<https://www.catie.ca>

Canadian Liver Foundation  
<https://www.liver.ca>

Know Your Status  
Saskatchewan Tailored HIV and Hep C Info  
<http://www.knowyourstatus.ca>

Preparing for Your Hep C Test  
<https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/your-health/conditions-diseases-services/healthline-online/tw9921>

### TO GET TESTED FOR HEP C

Visit your local clinic and Community Health Nurse (CHN) or visit this site to find a testing service near you:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/accessing-health-care-services/health-care-facilities>

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HEP C AND OTHER TOPICS, FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

-  Know Your Status
-  @\_knowyourstatus
-  @knowyourstatus\_yxe



# MYTH BUSTING HEPATITIS C

