

HCV/HIV Coinfection



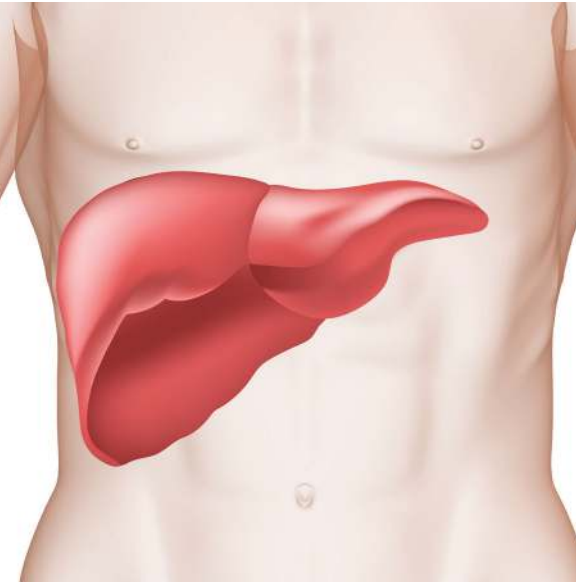
Your Liver. Your Life.

Why is the liver important?

The liver is the second largest organ in your body and is located under your rib cage on the right side. It weighs about three pounds and is shaped like a football that is flat on one side.

The liver performs many jobs in your body. It processes what you eat and drink into energy and nutrients your body can use. The liver also removes harmful substances from your blood.

What is hepatitis C (HCV)?



Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV causes inflammation to the liver (hepatitis) and may cause scar tissue (cirrhosis) to build up and replace healthy liver tissue, preventing the liver from working properly.

What is the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)?

HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system. HIV is the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

What is HCV/ HIV coinfection?

A person with hepatitis C and HIV has HCV/ HIV coinfection (having two or more viruses). One out of every four people with HIV also have HCV. (CDC 2015)

What is the relationship between HCV and HIV?

HCV and HIV are viruses that are transmitted blood-to-blood. People with HCV or HIV often have no symptoms. Since HCV and HIV can be transmitted through sharing infected needles, many drug users are coinfecting. Between 50% and 90% of HIV-infected injection drug users are also infected with HCV. (CDC 2015)

Can HIV make HCV worse?

Yes. HCV/HIV coinfection can cause faster progression of liver deterioration and an increased risk for life threatening scarring of the liver (cirrhosis).

What are the difference in HCV therapy and HIV therapy?

There is a cure for HCV, but not for HIV. The goal of HCV medication is to remove the virus from someone's body.

The goal of HIV medication is to suppress the virus so that it is not multiplying fast enough to enter the blood stream.

What are treatment options for people who have HCV/HIV coinfection?

There are many new medications available to cure the hepatitis C infection. These medications are very effective in co-infected individuals and have almost no serious side effect. People with HCV and HIV need to talk to their doctors to determine their treatment options.



Treatment options vary by person, and are determined by:

- Subtype of HCV virus the patient has.
- How advanced the patient's liver disease is.
- Patient's prior treatment history.

Other treatment related steps people with HCV and HIV can take:

- Avoid alcohol.
- Talk to a doctor before taking any new medicines, including over-the-counter,

- alternative, or herbal medicines, vitamins, and supplements that may harm your liver.
- Be vaccinated for hepatitis A and hepatitis B.

What is the best way to stop the spread of HCV and HIV?

There are no vaccines to prevent HCV or HIV. The only way to stop the spread of HCV and HIV is to avoid direct contact with infected blood.

- Do not share needles.
- Use clean needles and equipment for tattoos or body piercings.
- Do not share toothbrushes, razors, and other personal care items with others.
- Practice safe sex .
- Use recommended safety measures if you are exposed to blood or needle sticks at work.
- Wear gloves if you have to touch someone's blood.

Facts At-A-Glance

- The hepatitis C virus (HCV) causes inflammation to the liver (hepatitis) and may cause scar tissue (cirrhosis) to build up and replace healthy liver tissue, preventing the liver from functioning properly.
- The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the immune system and causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).
- A person with hepatitis C and HIV has HCV/HIV coinfection (having two or more viruses).
- One out of four people with HIV also have HCV.
- HCV and HIV are viruses that are transmitted blood-to-blood.
- People with HCV or HIV often have no symptoms.
- HCV/HIV coinfection can cause faster deterioration of the liver function and an increase risk for severe scarring of the liver (cirrhosis).
- People with HCV and HIV need to talk to their doctors as there are many newly available excellent medications available to cure Hepatitis C in patients with HIV.
- The main way to stop the spread of HCV and HIV is to avoid direct contact with infected blood by not sharing needles and practicing safe sex.



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American Liver Foundation

LiverFoundation.org

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HepC123.org

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