

HEPATITIS C

INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

What is hepatitis C (HCV)?

Hepatitis C, also called “hepatitis C virus” or HCV, causes your liver to be sick. A virus like HCV is like a germ that can enter our bodies and make us sick, so if we get HCV our livers can be severely injured.

How do you get HCV?

HCV is contagious, which means a person who has it can give it to someone else. The only way someone can get HCV is if someone’s infected blood gets into their body. Young children usually get HCV if their moms had or have it. Other ways include sharing anything that could have someone else’s blood on it (razors, toothbrushes, tattoo needles or piercing needles, or needles used for drug use).

Can HCV go away on its own?

If a child gets HCV at birth, it can go away on its own by age two. However, most people (kids and adults) need medicine to make it go away.

If I have HCV, will I make other people sick?

If you’re careful, you won’t give other people HCV. You can still hang out with friends and family and hug or kiss them. Just make sure you don’t share toothbrushes and razors or other things that might have your blood on them. If you hurt yourself, put a bandage on and clean up any blood on sinks or tables with bleach.

Do I have to tell people I have HCV?

Some people need to know you have HCV, including your school nurse, dentist, and all your other doctors and nurses. They need to know because they will have to be careful about contact with your blood. You don’t have to tell anyone else unless you want to do so.

What else can I do to protect my liver?

If you have HCV, try to eat healthy foods, and get exercise most days of the week. See your doctor once or twice a year. Get vaccinated against hepatitis A and hepatitis B. When you get older, it’s important not to drink alcohol because it may damage your liver. Also ask your doctor whether you can take medicine to kill the virus and ask which medicines it is safe for you to take.

To learn more about hepatitis C, scan one of the QR codes below. For a complete list of our free resources, visit: liverfoundation.org/resource-center.

ALF is solely responsible for this content.

Copyright 2023 | All rights reserved

For questions about liver wellness and disease, or for emotional support to patients at the point of crisis and information on local resources including physician referrals, please contact our Helpline at 1-800-465-4837.

