

## HEPATITIS C

Hepatitis C is a disease that harms the liver. The liver is a big organ in the upper right side of the belly. It is a viral infection. The virus is called the hepatitis C virus. It spreads from person to person through contact with blood. This can happen in a few ways, like sharing drug needles or having sex. Many of the hepatitis C patients end up developing chronic infection. Hepatitis C is one of the main causes for liver transplant in the United States.

## SYMPTOMS

Most people with hepatitis C have no symptoms. Hence, it is possible for them to have the disease for some time before it is diagnosed. When symptoms do occur, they can include fatigue, weak, nausea, decreased in appetite, muscle or joint aches, and unintentional weight loss.

In most cases, hepatitis C lasts for many years. That can lead to liver scarring, called "cirrhosis." Many people with cirrhosis have no symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they can include swelling in the belly and legs, bruising or bleeding easily, feeling full in the belly, yellowish color of the skin or whites of the eyes, and/or confusion.

## TRANSMISSION

Contact with the blood of an infected person, primarily through sharing contaminated needles or other equipment to inject drugs. Transmission has also occurred from needlestick injuries in health care settings; unsafe injection practices and other lapses in infection control in health care settings; being born to a mother who has Hepatitis C; and through blood transfusions and organ transplants before 1992, when widespread screening of the blood supply began in the United States.

## DIAGNOSIS

Blood tests and imaging test of the liver are typically ordered by the doctor. Often times, a liver biopsy is ordered as well, to determine how much scarring there is in the liver, and if cirrhosis is present.

## TREATMENT

Treatment depends on what type of hepatitis C you have. There are different medicines to treat hepatitis C. Some of them only work on certain forms of the hepatitis C virus. Treatment usually lasts at least 3 months, if not longer, depending on what type of hepatitis C you have.

With modern therapy, many times, hepatitis C can nowadays be cured. We know living with liver disease is a challenge. Our team is trained and dedicated to manage and cure liver disease in the best possible way.