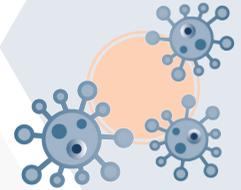




National
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Hepatitis C and Chronic Kidney Disease

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



Hepatitis C is a serious viral infection.

It may cause serious health problems, including:

- Chronic liver disease leading to scarring (cirrhosis)
- Liver cancer
- Liver failure
- Higher risk of diabetes and heart disease
- Increased risk of some forms of cancer
- Kidney disease

Blood tests can show if someone has the virus.

Symptoms can include:

- Fatigue
- Fever
- Upset stomach or stomach pain
- Bloating
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Weight loss
- Itchy skin
- Yellowish eyes and skin (jaundice)
- Dark yellow color of urine
- Some may have few or no symptoms

Hepatitis C is spread by contact with the blood of an infected person.

You may be at increased risk of getting hepatitis C if you:

- Were born between 1945-1965
- Have ever used intravenous (IV) drugs
- Received blood transfusions or a solid organ transplant prior to July 1992
- Had healthcare-related contact with HCV-infected blood, such as exposure to contaminated needles
- Received a tattoo in an unregulated setting
- Had unprotected sex with an infected person
- Have been on hemodialysis

Hepatitis C infection is strongly associated with kidney disease.

Kidney Disease and Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is more common in people with kidney disease than the general population.

Hepatitis C can be a cause of kidney disease, or make existing kidney disease worse.

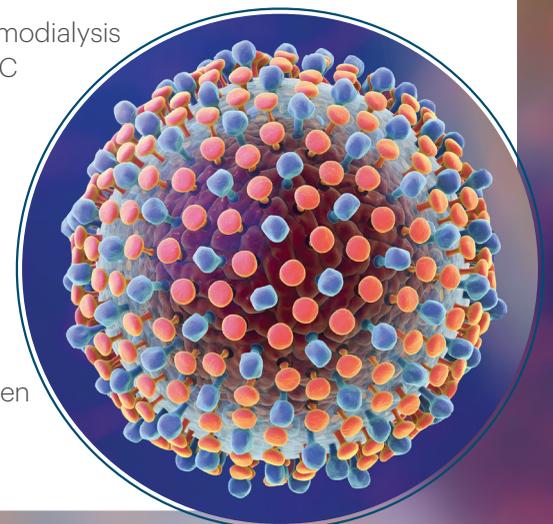
People receiving a kidney transplant, or donating a kidney, are routinely tested for hepatitis C.

Hemodialysis and Hepatitis C

People receiving long-term hemodialysis have a risk of getting hepatitis C through transmission in the dialysis clinic.

The risk is small because of strict standard health precautions used in dialysis units today.

However, some cases of hepatitis C being spread between patients have been reported.





There is no vaccine, but hepatitis C can be treated.

The goal of treatment is to rid the body of the hepatitis C virus and slow damage to the liver.

Medicines used to treat a hepatitis C infection are called antiviral drugs.

A combination of drugs may be used to treat an infection.

Newer antivirals appear to be more effective and have fewer side effects than previous treatments.

Steps can be taken to reduce risk and manage health.

Prevention

Avoid using intravenous (IV) drugs.

Avoid sharing personal care items, such as toothbrushes or razors, that could potentially have traces of blood on them.

Follow safe sex guidelines, including using a latex condom and having only one sexual partner.

If you plan to get a tattoo or body piercing, make sure anyone providing these services follow proper infection control measures, such as washing hands and using disposable gloves and sterilized instruments.



Treatment

Take all medicines as instructed by your healthcare professional.

Talk with your healthcare professional about which treatments are right for you.



Kidney Disease

If you have kidney failure and plan to start dialysis or have a kidney transplant, it is important to be tested for hepatitis C.

If you are receiving hemodialysis, make sure your fistula stays clean. Also, make sure the dialysis unit does the following during treatment:

- Wash their hands
- Wear clean gloves, gowns, and protective eyewear
- Clean and disinfect treatment area
- Maintain separate areas for clean and soiled items and equipment

This education tool was supported by



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