

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
Hepatitis C Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. What is Hepatitis C?
- A. Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV can be found in the blood of people who have the disease. About 15% of the time Hepatitis C has an acute (short-lived) course; the remainder of infections are chronic (long lasting). About 25% of infections progress to cirrhosis.
- Q. How could a person have gotten Hepatitis C?
- A. HCV is spread primarily by direct contact with human blood. For example, you may become infected with HCV if:
- You had a blood transfusion prior to 1992
 - You have ever injected street drugs
 - You have ever had sex with a person infected with HCV
 - You lived with someone who was infected with HCV and shared items such as razors or toothbrushes that might have had his/her blood on them.
 - Tattooing, body piercing, or sharing needles while incarcerated
- Q. How can someone with HCV infection prevent spreading HCV to others?
- A. Use the following precautions:
- Do not share personal items that might have your blood on them such as toothbrushes, dental appliances, razors, or nail-grooming equipment
 - Cover your cuts and skin sores.
 - Don't have unprotected sex
 - Don't share needles, tattoo or body piercing equipment
- Q. How can someone protect themselves from getting hepatitis C and other diseases spread by contact with human blood and body fluids?
- A. Use the following precautions:
- Don't use injection drugs
 - Don't get a tattoo or body piercing
 - Don't have unprotected sex
- Q. What can someone with HCV infection do to protect their liver?
- A. Use the following precautions:
- Stop using all alcohol
 - Stop using all street drugs
 - Don't take any over-the-counter medications or herbal remedies without your doctors knowledge
 - Avoid being overweight
- Q. What other information should I be aware of?
- A. Be aware of the following facts:
- HCV is not spread by sneezing, coughing, food or water, sharing eating utensils or drinking glasses, or by casual contact
 - A person can be re-infected after treatment because prior infection does not give protection against a different strain.
 - Your doctor will make medical decisions based on your individual medical condition.
- Q. What are the chances that the medication will eliminate the virus?
- A. Current medication treatments for HCV are about 80-95% effective in eliminating the virus

Nurse Educator's Signature _____ Date _____

Offender Signature _____ DOC # _____ Date _____

(Adapted from NIH Consensus Statement on Management of Hepatitis C)