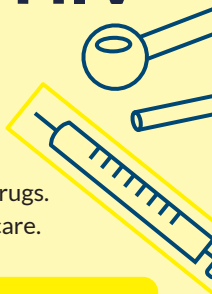


# Hepatitis C and HIV

## What you need to know if you use drugs

Hepatitis C and HIV are infections that can harm people's health, including people who use drugs. Your health matters and you deserve respectful care.



### What are hepatitis C and HIV?



- **Hepatitis C is an infection in the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus.** Over time, the virus causes liver injury and scarring and can make you very sick.
- **HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that weakens your immune system.** Over time, this can affect your body's ability to fight off disease and illness.

### Know your status



- **You can have hepatitis C and/or HIV for many years without having symptoms or feeling sick,** even though the viruses are injuring your body.
- **The only way to know if you have hepatitis C and/or HIV is to get tested.** The sooner you know, the better it is for your health.
- **Talk to a healthcare provider or harm reduction worker about getting tested** for hepatitis C and HIV as well as other sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections.

### Hepatitis C and HIV treatments



- Hepatitis C and HIV treatment medications are simple to take, have few side effects and are very effective at curing hepatitis C and treating HIV.
- **Everyone with hepatitis C and/or HIV should speak with their healthcare provider about their treatment options, including people who use drugs.**

## How are hepatitis C and HIV passed?

**Hepatitis C is passed through blood.** The most common way that hepatitis C can be passed is through sharing supplies used to inject, smoke or snort drugs.

**HIV is passed through blood, sexual fluids and breast milk.** The most common ways that HIV can be passed are through anal and vaginal sex when no protection is used and through sharing supplies used to inject drugs.

## Tips for safer drug use and safer sex to prevent hepatitis C and HIV



Use all new supplies every time you inject, including new needles, syringes, filters, sterile water and cookers.



Use your own pipe or stem and mouthpiece to smoke drugs.



Use your own straw, rolled paper or other supplies to snort drugs.



Use condoms and lube during sex.



Talk to a healthcare provider about whether pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is right for you. PrEP helps to prevent HIV but not hepatitis C. PrEP usually involves taking certain HIV medications every day to prevent HIV.

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