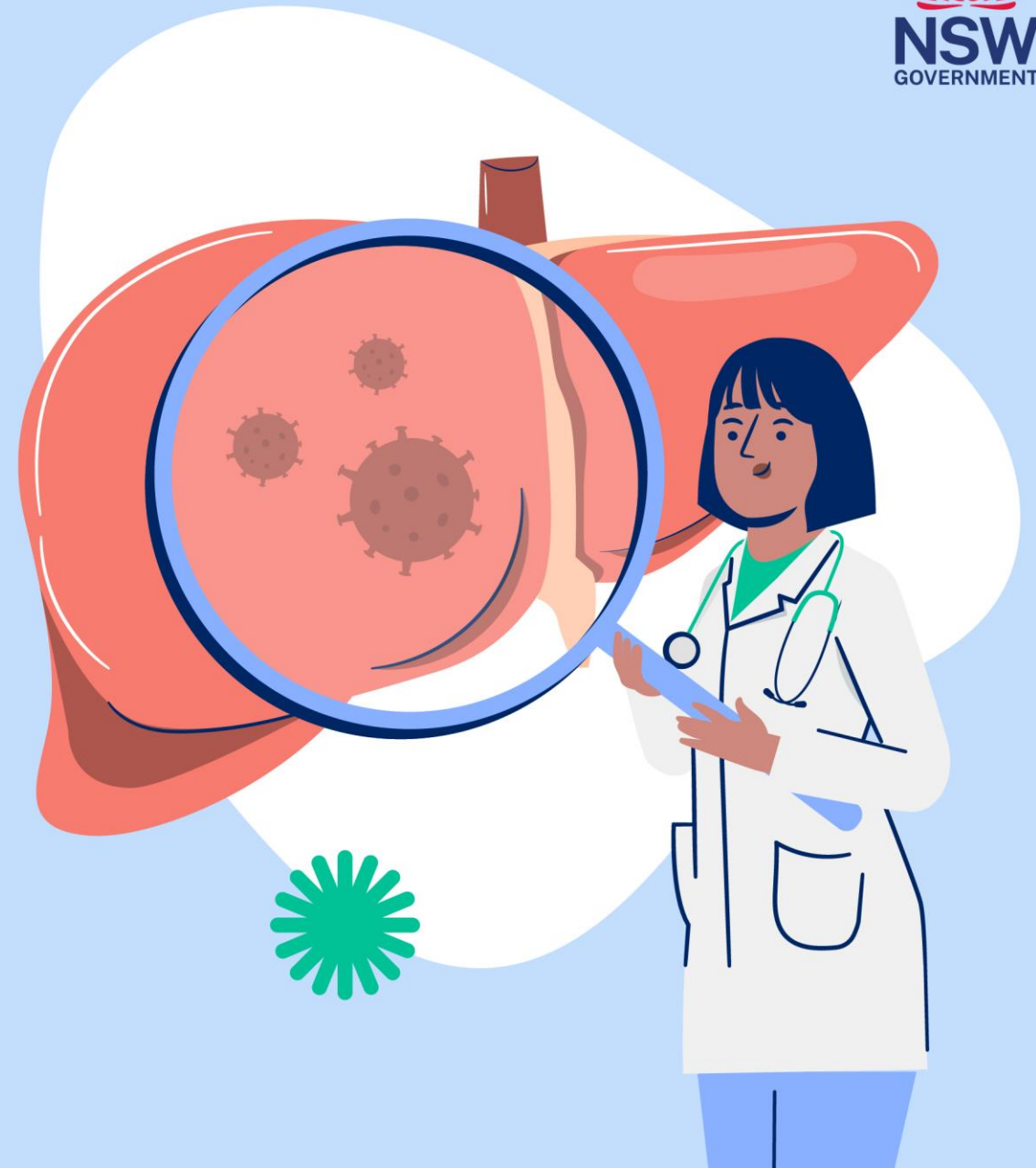


Understanding Hepatitis C



Why does hepatitis C matter?



Hepatitis C matters because it can lead to serious liver damage and liver cancer if left untreated

Hepatitis C can affect anyone

Today we will talk about...



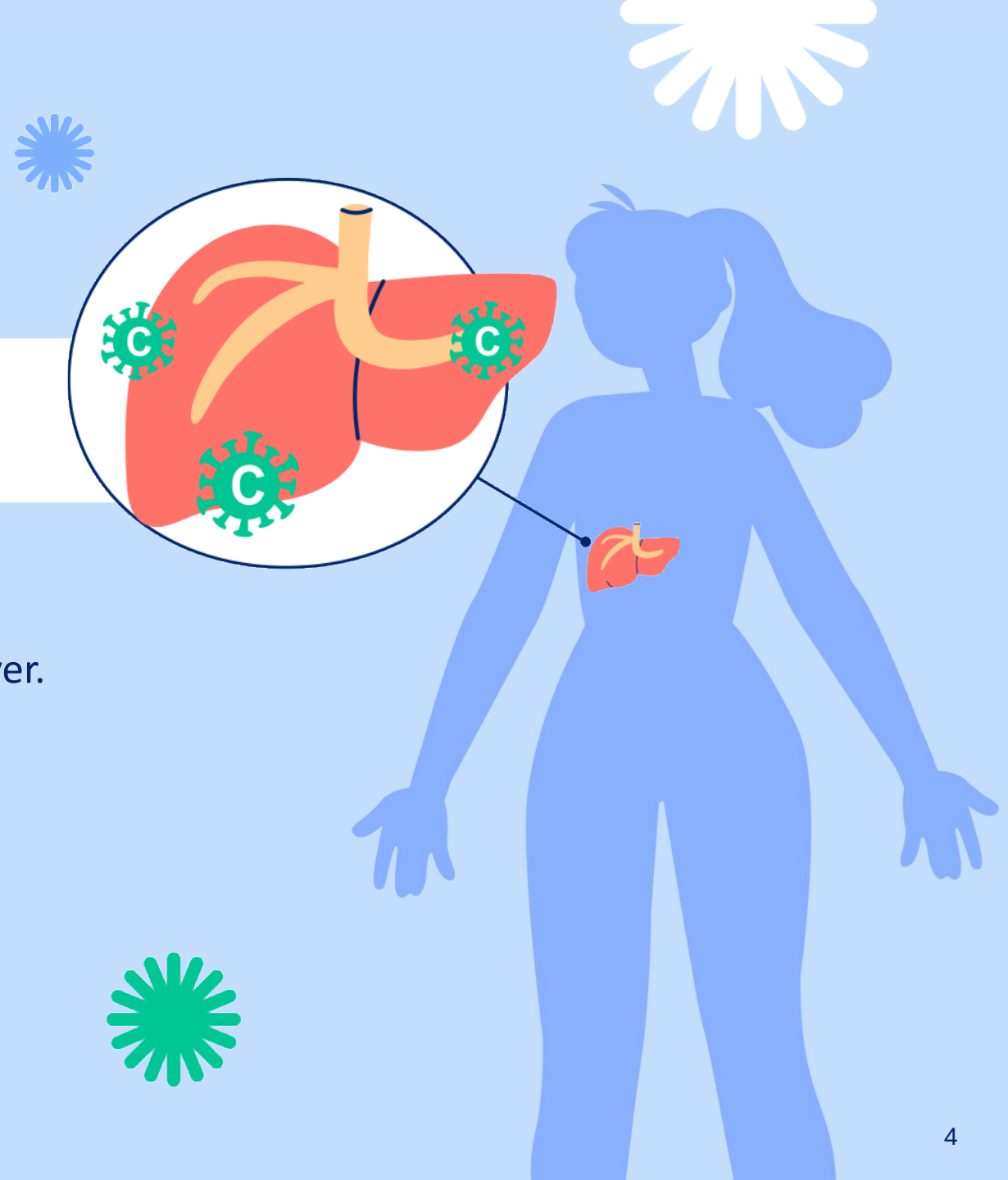
- ✓ Hepatitis C – the basics
- ✓ How you get hepatitis C
- ✓ Stopping the spread hepatitis C
- ✓ Testing for hepatitis C
- ✓ Curing hepatitis C
- ✓ Who do you tell and not tell
- ✓ Where to get more information



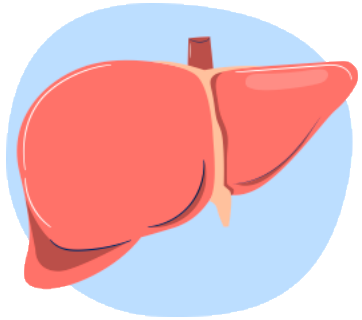
What is hepatitis C?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver

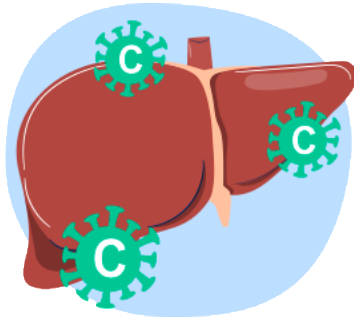
- ✓ Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that affects your liver.
- ✓ There is a cure for hepatitis C.
- ✓ Without treatment hepatitis C can cause liver disease and liver cancer.



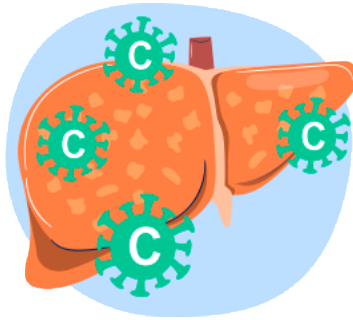
How does hepatitis C affect your liver?



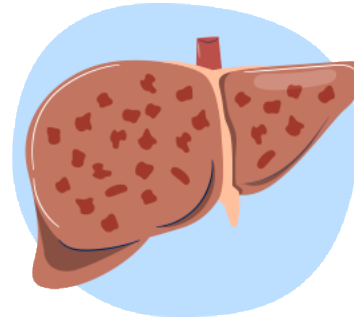
Healthy
liver



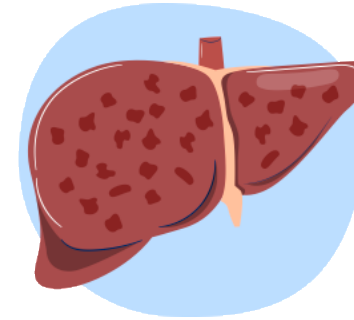
Acute infection
(short term)



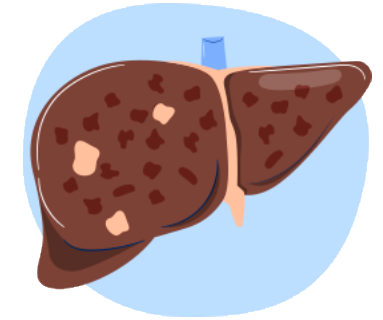
Chronic
infection
(long term)



Liver damage
(cirrhosis)



Liver
failure



Cancer

How do you get hepatitis C?



When the blood of a person with hepatitis C enters the body of another person

This includes amounts of blood too small to be seen

You can get hepatitis C from...



These
are safe in
Australia

- ✓ Unsterile medical, dental, cosmetic procedures, vaccinations or surgery done overseas
- ✓ Unsterile traditional practices that involve blood, such as tattooing and skin piercing
- ✓ Using someone else's personal items that may have blood on them, such as razors and toothbrushes
- ✓ Mother to child during pregnancy or childbirth if the mother has hepatitis C
- ✓ Blood-to-blood contact during sex without a condom
- ✓ Accidental needlestick injury
- ✓ Sharing and reusing any equipment used for injecting drugs or steroids
- ✓ Blood transfusions in Australia before 1990

You cannot get hepatitis C from...



Sharing
toilets



Sharing food
or utensils



Mosquito or
insect bites



Swimming
pools



Sneezing



Coughing



Hugging



Kissing

What are the symptoms of hepatitis C?

- ✓ Many people with hepatitis C don't show any symptoms or signs of illness.
- ✓ People with chronic hepatitis C may not feel sick until their liver becomes very damaged. This can take many years.

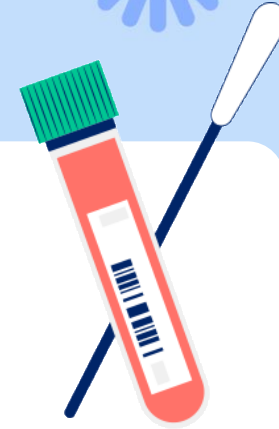
The only way to know if you have hepatitis C is through a blood test



Testing for hepatitis C

Types of tests

- ✓ **Antibody test:** shows if you have ever had hepatitis C.
- ✓ **PCR test:** shows if you have hepatitis C now.
- ✓ **Dried Blood Spot (DBS) test:** shows hepatitis C in your blood.



Ask your doctor for
a hepatitis C test.
Testing is free if you
have a Medicare card

Where to get tested

- ✓ General Practitioner (GP)
- ✓ Family Planning Australia
- ✓ NSW Sexual Health Clinics
- ✓ Online for the DBS test



Who should get a hepatitis C test?

If you were born or have lived in a country where hepatitis C is common, it is important you have a hepatitis C test



It is also important to get tested for hepatitis C if you:

- ✓ have had a blood transfusion, vaccination, surgery or other medical or dental procedure in another country
- ✓ have had a traditional medical practice e.g. cutting, cupping or coining
- ✓ have hepatitis B or HIV
- ✓ are not sure if your tattoo or body piercing was done with sterile equipment
- ✓ have injected drugs or steroids or have ever shared injecting equipment
- ✓ have ever been in prison
- ✓ had a blood transfusion in Australia before February 1990

How is hepatitis C treated?



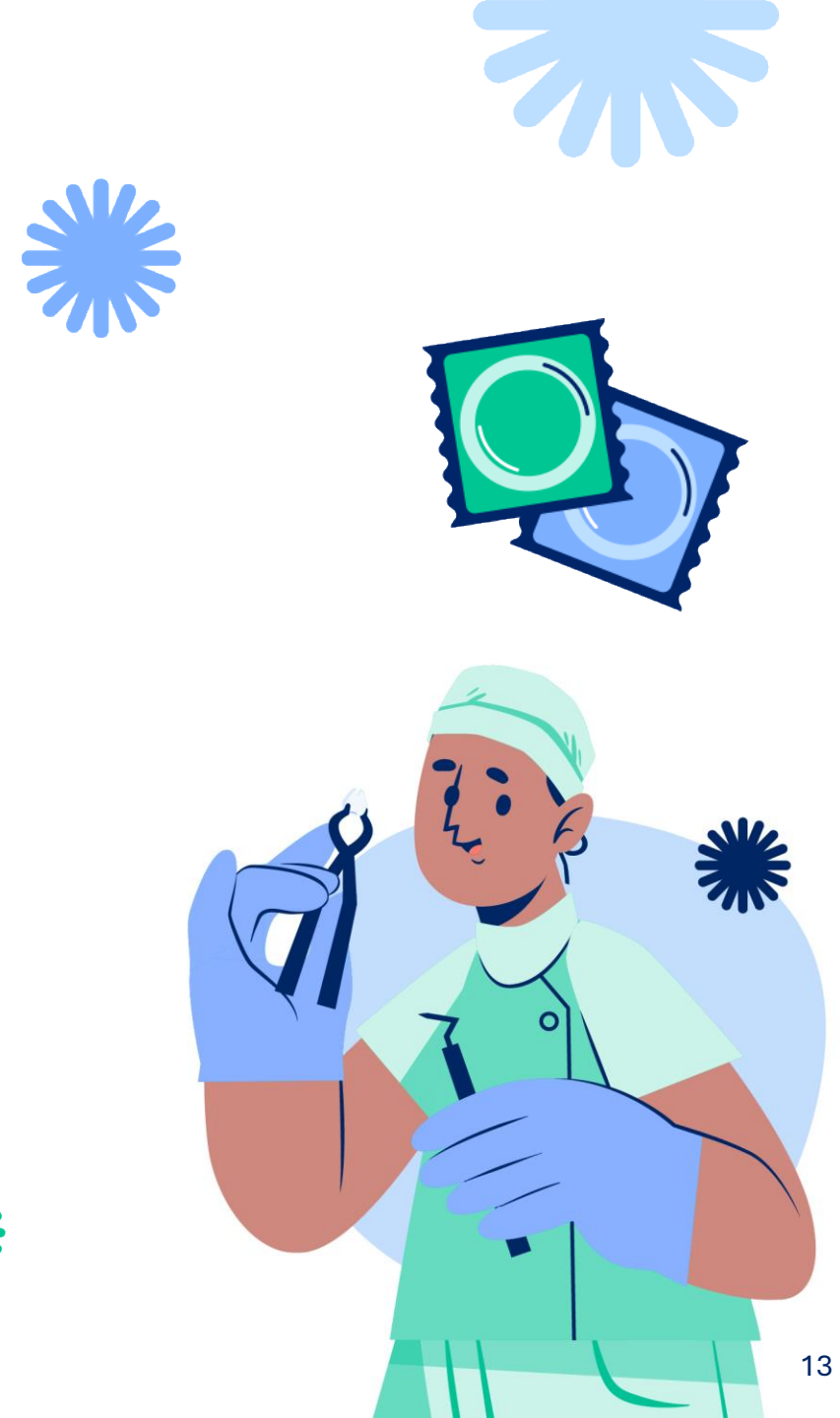
Hepatitis C is treated with medications called Direct Acting Anti-virals (DAAs)

They are pills or tablets that:

- ✓ Clear the virus from your body
- ✓ Are taken for about 8 to 12 weeks
- ✓ Have few or no side-effects
- ✓ Lower the risk of liver damage and getting liver cancer
- ✓ Are low-cost if you have a Medicare card
- ✓ Cure 95% of people living with hepatitis C

How do I protect myself from getting hepatitis C?

- ✓ Don't share personal items like toothbrushes or razors
- ✓ Only get tattoos or body piercings from licensed professionals with sterile (clean) equipment
- ✓ Only get medical and dental procedures by licensed professionals
- ✓ Use condoms and lubricant during sex
- ✓ Be careful about getting medical and dental procedures when travelling overseas
- ✓ Wear gloves when cleaning up blood
- ✓ Never share drug injecting equipment



Understanding stigma around hepatitis C



Many people with viral hepatitis face negative judgment because of:

- ✓ How others think they got hepatitis C
- ✓ Actions linked to hepatitis C

This can make people afraid to talk about their hepatitis C

Stigma creates barriers to healthcare and support

Who to tell and not tell



By law you must tell people:

- ✓ When you give blood
- ✓ When donating organs and sperm
- ✓ When you apply for health insurance
- ✓ If you are joining the Australian Defence Force
- ✓ When you apply for a visa to live in Australia
- ✓ If you are a health care worker who does medical procedures

You do not have to tell:

- ✓ Your boss at work
- ✓ The people you work with or go to school with
- ✓ Family members



Your doctor cannot tell your family that you have hepatitis C

Where to get help for hepatitis C

Your doctor or GP

Liver clinics and specialists - 1800 803 990 www.hep.org.au

Sexual health clinics - 1800 451 624
www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth

No medicare card required

Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service www.mhahs.org.au

Hepatitis NSW – 1800 803 990
www.hep.org.au



Where to get help in your language

If you need assistance with talking to your doctor or health provider in your language:

- ✓ Call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50
- ✓ The service is free and confidential
- ✓ Ask the receptionist to book a free interpreter for you



What have we learnt today?



True or False?

1. You can get hepatitis C from kissing someone who has the hepatitis C virus.
2. Hepatitis C is passed on to others by sharing food.
3. You can protect yourself from getting hepatitis C by getting vaccinated.
4. You should get tested if you have had a tattoo overseas and are not sure that equipment used was clean.

Messages to take away

- ✓ Hepatitis C is an infection caused by the hepatitis C virus
- ✓ It is passed on by blood to blood contact with infected blood
- ✓ It can cause serious liver damage if left untreated
- ✓ Many people have the virus and do not know it
- ✓ There is no vaccination but there is a cure
- ✓ The cure for hepatitis C is 95% effective





Questions?

Developed by:

NSW Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service

(MHAHS) mhahs.org.au

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MULTICULTURAL HIV
AND HEPATITIS SERVICE

