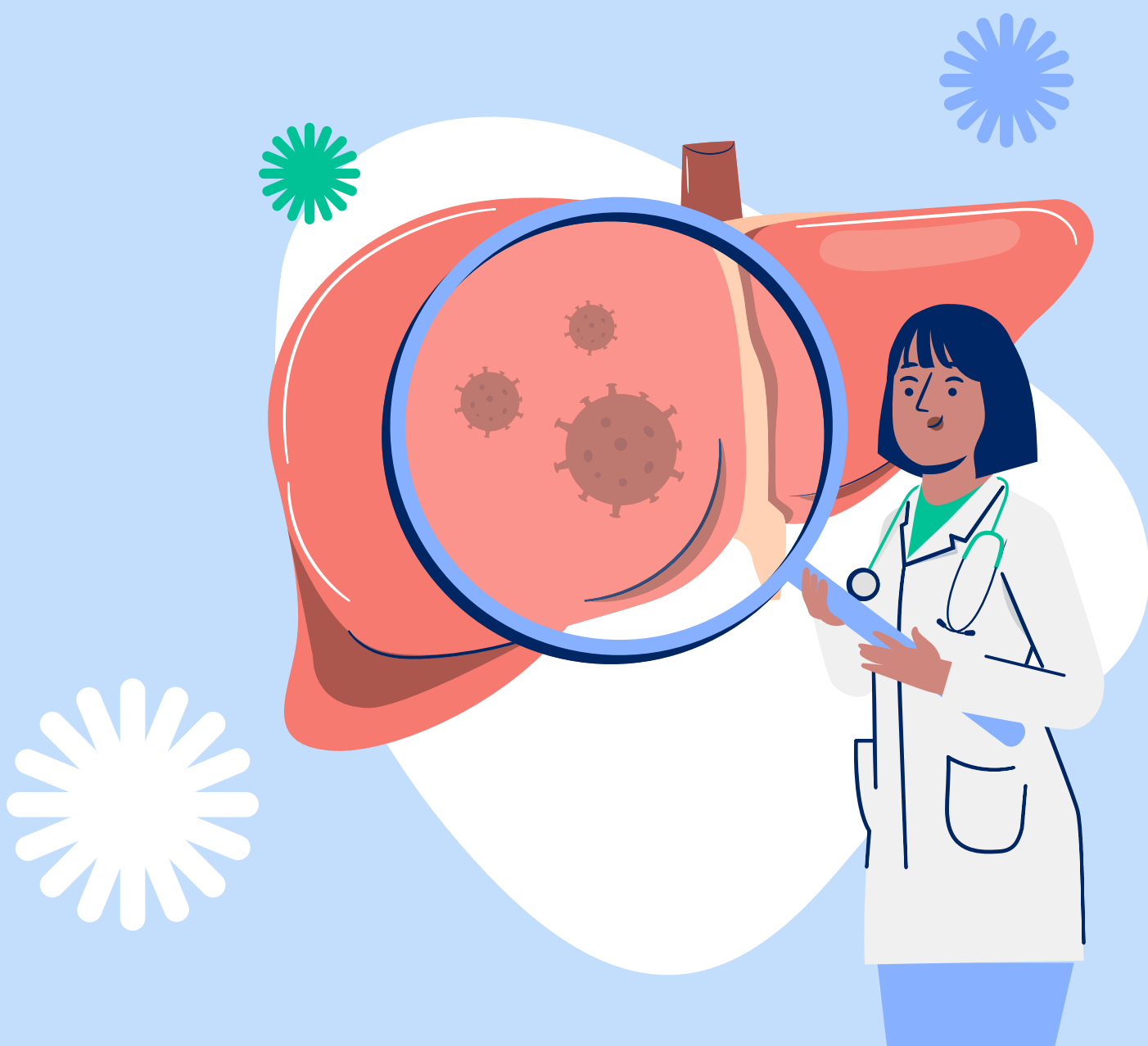


Facilitator Guide 2025

Understanding Hepatitis C



Statement of acknowledgement

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, and I pay my respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. I recognise their ongoing connection to land, water, and community, and I honour their rich cultural heritage and contributions.



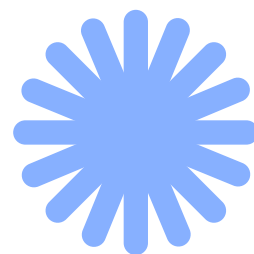
Acknowledgement of Country

Artwork

Ngurang Dali Mana Burudi — a place to get better

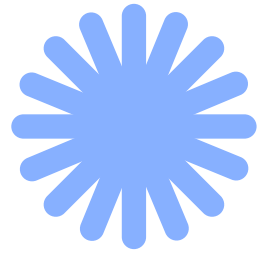
The map was created by our Aboriginal Health staff telling the story of a cultural pathway for our community to gain better access to healthcare.

Artwork by Aboriginal artist Lee Hampton utilising our story.



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Introduction

The **Understanding Hepatitis C** education package was created by the NSW Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS) as part of the broader Blood Borne Virus (BBV), Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), and Liver Health community education toolkits, designed specifically for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

There is a series of five education packages including:

- Understanding Hepatitis B
- Understanding Hepatitis C
- Understanding Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- Understanding Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs)
- Understanding Liver Health

Each education package is designed to be delivered independently from the others, and all include a facilitator's guide (PDF) and a slide presentation (PowerPoint or PDF) available on the MHAHS website – www.mhahs.org.au.

The information provided in the **Understanding Hepatitis C** education package aims to:

- Increase participant awareness and knowledge about hepatitis C prevention, testing, and treatment.
- Promote regular testing for people at risk of getting hepatitis C
- Encourage participants and their communities to access NSW healthcare services
- Address misinformation and stigma that people may have about hepatitis C
- Provide participants and their communities with accurate, up-to-date information
- Provide links to health and support services across NSW.

About the MHAHS

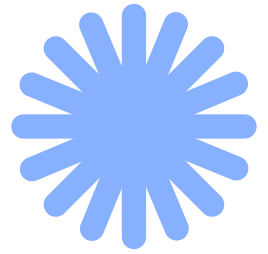
The NSW MHAHS supports people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds across New South Wales to address HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and sexual health. It works with communities to provide information, education, and support to improve access to health care for all.

The NSW MHAHS also partners with health services and community organisations to provide culturally tailored health education and multilingual programs to empower communities with knowledge and tools they need to navigate the health care system confidently.

NSW MHAHS is hosted by Sydney Local Health District.

Email: info@mhahs.org.au





About the facilitator guide

This facilitator guide is a practical resource to support individuals and organisations in delivering the **Understanding Hepatitis C** community education sessions to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities across NSW using the accompanying slide presentation.

The guide is designed to help facilitators provide participants with information about hepatitis C in a simple and clear way. It equips facilitators with the knowledge and resources needed to run sessions that are supportive, non-judgmental, and informative.

This guide provides facilitators with clear instructions for delivering community education sessions. It includes step-by-step support for presenting each part of the slide presentation, making easy to follow and deliver. Each slide includes detailed and structured notes to guide facilitators in delivering the session.

It includes:

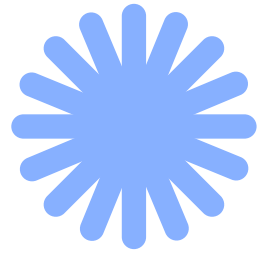
- Presentation slides covering essential information on hepatitis C
- Facilitator notes with key talking points and explanations for each slide including references
- Instructions for facilitating discussions and engaging participants
- Activity suggestions to promote active learning and participation
- Sample evaluation form for gathering participant feedback after the session
- A glossary explaining various terms relating to hepatitis C
- Links to multilingual resources and further information.

By using this guide, facilitators can:

- Explain hepatitis C – what it is, how it is transmitted and the health effects on individuals
- Encourage participants and their communities to get tested and treated
- Clarify common myths and reduce stigma surrounding hepatitis C
- Guide participants on where to access hepatitis C testing, treatment, and support.

Who is this information for?

The information in the education session is for CALD community members (adults and young people). The education session is available in a range of community languages including Arabic, Bengali, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Mongolian, Nepali, Urdu and Vietnamese.



Who can facilitate the education session?

The facilitator guide has been developed to prepare and support the facilitator delivering the community education session.

The information in the guide is designed for anyone interested in learning about hepatitis C and who is interested in educating others. Education sessions can be delivered by bilingual facilitators with an interest in raising awareness about BBVs, STIs and liver health in their community. Ideally, facilitators should have experience in delivering community education. It is also important for facilitators to be aware of the sensitive topics and cultural considerations that may arise during the session.

No prior medical knowledge is required and this guide provides all necessary information for facilitators to confidently deliver the session.

Preparing to deliver community education sessions

To effectively deliver the community education sessions, it is recommended that facilitators:

- Familiarise themselves with the content of both the slide presentation and the facilitator guide
- Consider translating the talking points written in italics under each slide into your language
- Read the recommended articles and visit the suggested websites
- Practise delivering the content to ensure smooth delivery and familiarity with the flow of the session
- Test equipment to make sure it is set up and working properly before the session begins.

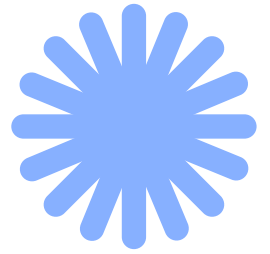
These steps will help facilitators feel more confident and prepared to deliver an informative session.

How long is needed to deliver the education session?

The slide presentation contains a lot of information, so please adapt the content from the slides and facilitator guide to best suit your group's needs.

While the recommended duration for the education session is 30-45 minutes, this can be adjusted depending on your audience and the setting.

If possible, remain available after the session to address any additional questions. Facilitators have the flexibility to shorten or extend the session by focusing on key slides or incorporating more time for discussion.



What is the delivery mode of the education session?

The education session can be delivered in various formats:

- **Face-to-face:** ideal for community gatherings, workplaces, and group sessions
- **Virtual or webinar format:** facilitators can deliver the session via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or any other virtual platforms
- **Mixed approach:** it can be a combination of in-person and virtual delivery for broader accessibility.

Regardless of the delivery method, facilitators are encouraged to make sessions interactive and engaging, allowing participants to ask questions and share experiences.

Talking about BBVs, STIs and Liver Health

When discussing BBVs (HIV, hepatitis B and C), STIs, and liver health, it is important to approach the conversation with cultural sensitivity, empathy, and accurate information.

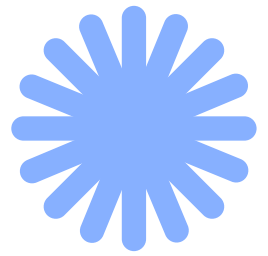
The information around these topics can be very sensitive, particularly for people from CALD communities as discussing sexual health may be considered uncomfortable or a taboo in some communities.

Many people may have concerns about stigma, discrimination, or misunderstandings related to these topics. Facilitators should create a safe and respectful environment where participants feel comfortable discussing and learning about BBVs, STIs and liver health.

Sensitivities

It is important for facilitators to recognise that these topics can be difficult for some people and that participants or their loved ones may have personal experiences related to BBVs, STIs, or liver health. It's also important to use non-judgmental language and remind everyone that the session focuses on health and well-being.

Privacy and confidentiality should always be respected, and participants should be assured they don't have to share personal experiences unless they choose to. Facilitators should use inclusive and culturally appropriate language and adjust their language to suit the audience's literacy levels, keeping everything simple and clear.



Stigma and discrimination

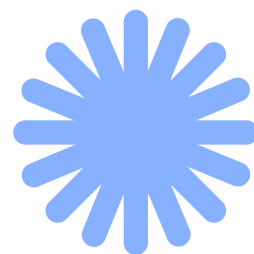
When planning the education sessions, consider that many people with BBVs, STIs or poor liver health may experience stigma and discrimination. This can prevent them from seeking testing, treatment, and support. Facilitators need to understand that stigma can come from fear, misinformation, and cultural beliefs.

The community education sessions:

- Emphasise that BBVs, STIs and poor liver health are medical conditions that can be cured or treated and managed and prevented in many cases
- Explain that stigma creates barriers for people to access healthcare. This can increase the risk of passing on to other people
- Educate participants on the facts about transmission and prevention to challenge myths and misconceptions
- Address concerns about confidentiality by explaining that testing and treatment services are private and professional
- Promote an inclusive and respectful discussion, avoiding any blame or shame.

Common risk factors and barriers specific to CALD populations

- Limited access to healthcare due to language barriers, migration status, and lack of familiarity with the healthcare system or financial constraints can prevent people from getting tested, treatment and support.
- Cultural beliefs and stigma: In some cultures, discussions around sexual health, BBVs, and STIs may be considered taboo, leading to avoidance or delayed testing and treatment.
- Lack of culturally appropriate health information about BBVs, STIs and liver health.
- Different health beliefs and traditional medicine practices, which may impact engagement with mainstream healthcare services.
- Increased vulnerability due to migration experiences, such as trauma, displacement, or lack of stable housing.
- Having been born or have lived in country where BBVs are common.
- Fear of stigma and judgment from family, community, or healthcare providers.
- Mistrust of the healthcare system, especially among newly arrived migrants or refugees.
- The lack of symptoms for some of the BBVs, STIs and liver diseases which leads people to believe they do not need to be tested.

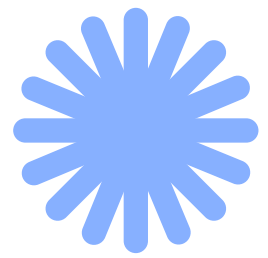


Planning for the information session

Facilitators or organisations should take the time to prepare the materials they need, book a venue, and promote the education session to groups of people who might be interested in the topic.

The following checklist will help you organise your session.

Action	Tick off
Booking a venue	
Consider the number of participants to match the seating availability.	
Choose a comfortable, accessible location that suits your audience (e.g., community centre, library, health service, or online platform for virtual sessions).	
Ensure the venue has the necessary facilities (Wi-Fi, projector, seating, parking, toilets, fire emergency exits, accessibility for people with disabilities, etc.).	
Promoting the session via your networks	
Advertise the session through community groups, social media, local health services, and word-of-mouth.	
Use multilingual flyers, posters, or digital invitations if necessary	
If applicable, partner with local organisations that engage with the target community.	
Consider the gender make up – is there a preference for male only or female only groups?	
Consider any cultural or religious key dates when you plan the session (e.g. is it a fasting period?).	
What you will need for the information session	
Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laptop (if presenting slides or playing videos).• Projector or TV screen (for in-person sessions).• Microphone/speaker system (for larger venues).• Internet access (if sharing online resources).	
Presentation Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PowerPoint presentation (PPT) and facilitator manual (digital or printed copies).• Printed handouts for participants (if relevant).• Evaluation forms (in English and other relevant languages).	
Name Tags (for in-person sessions) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps create a welcoming and interactive environment.• Use name stickers or pre-printed name tags if needed.	



Planning for the information session (cont...)

Action	Tick off
What you will need for the information session	
Stationery <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pens, markers, and paper for note-taking, activities, or participant feedback.• Whiteboard or flipchart (if using for group discussions).	
Multilingual Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printed or digital fact sheets and brochures on BBVs, STIs, liver health and available health services.• Interpreter information (e.g., contact details for TIS National).• Links to multicultural health services such as MHAHS for further support.	

Key takeaways for facilitators:

- **Clear Information:** Use simple, straightforward language to explain hepatitis C and its impact on health.
- **Empathy:** Approach sensitive topics with understanding and without judgment.
- **Engagement:** Create a safe and open space for participants to ask questions and share their experiences.
- **Action:** Encourage participants to get tested, vaccinated, and access support as needed

Slide 1



Facilitator instruction

- Welcome the group to the education session

Good [morning/afternoon/evening] everyone, and welcome to today's session.

- Introduce yourself to the group

*My name is [Your Name], and I work as [Your Role] at [Your Workplace].
It's great to have you all here.*

- Provide an acknowledgement of the Country

Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I pay my respects to Elders past, present, and emerging and recognize the importance of cultural heritage in health and wellbeing.

- Explain any housekeeping information, e.g. evacuation procedures, location of bathrooms, finishing time, any rules, etc


- Explain that if anyone feels uncomfortable with any information in this session, they are welcome to excuse themselves.

This session is about understanding hepatitis C. We'll be discussing for example, how hepatitis C is transmitted, who should get tested, available treatments, and ways to prevent it. This is a safe space to learn and ask questions, and we encourage open discussion. However, if at any point you feel uncomfortable, you are welcome to step out or speak with me privately after the session.

Now, let's get started.

Slide 2

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

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2

Facilitator notes:

Discussion:

Ask: *Why do you think hepatitis C matters?*

(Check their understanding around the importance of learning about hepatitis C. Acknowledge their feedback and if necessary, take notes on a whiteboard or flipchart)

Answer: *Hepatitis C matters because it can cause serious liver damage, liver cancer, and even death if left untreated.*

Explain to participants that hepatitis C matters because it is still a leading cause of liver cancer in Australia, which is the fastest growing cause of cancer death in the country.

There are many benefits of testing and treating people for hepatitis C such as:

- *Hepatitis C is curable*
- *stop the spread of hepatitis C virus*
- *prevent liver complications*
- *improve the life of a person with hepatitis C*


Slide 3

Today we will talk about...



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- ✓ 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



3

Facilitator notes:

Now that we understand why hepatitis C matters, let's have a look at what we'll be covering in today's session. Today we will talk about:

- *How you get hepatitis C and how it is spread to other people*
- *Stopping the spread of hepatitis C and ways to prevent it*
- *Testing for hepatitis C –when to test and what tests are available*
- *Treating hepatitis C through medication*
- *Knowing who you have to tell and who you don't have to tell –knowing your rights*
- *Where to get more information*

Feel free to ask questions at any time.

At the end of this session, please take a moment to fill in an evaluation form to help us improve future education sessions.

Let's get started!

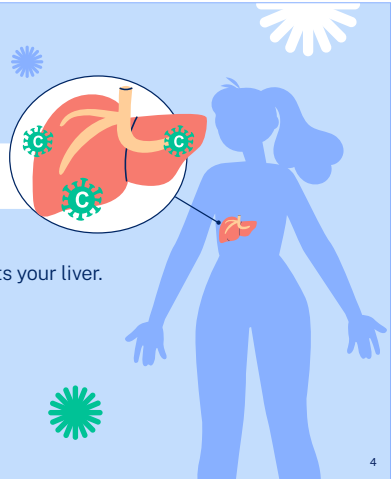
Slide 4

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.

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An illustration of a person's silhouette in blue. Inside the silhouette, a red liver is shown with a yellow arrow pointing to it. Several green virus particles, each with a white 'C' on it, are scattered around the liver and the person's head. The background is light blue with a white sun in the top right corner.

Facilitator notes:

Discussion:

Ask: *Before we go ahead, let me ask you a quick question, does anyone know what the word hepatitis means?*

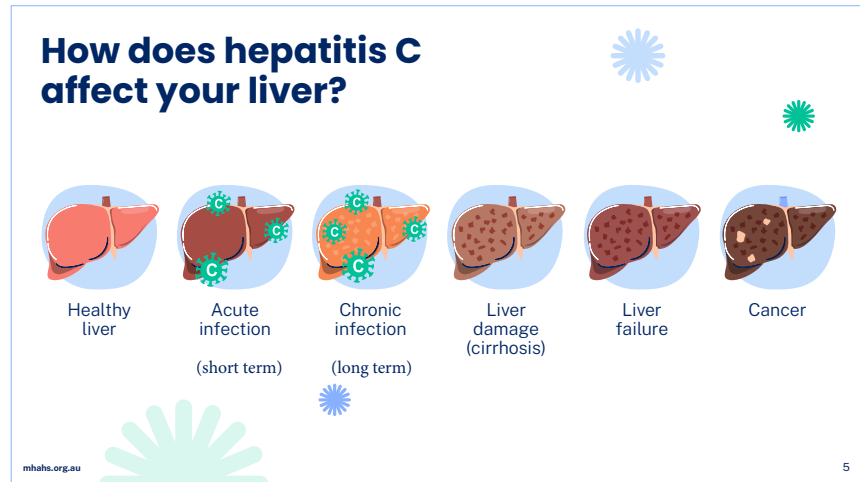
(Give time for them to answer it and acknowledge everyone's answers)

Answer: *The word hepatitis simply means inflammation. Inflammation is the redness or swelling that happens when the body is trying to heal or fight off bacteria and viruses in your body.*

Now, let's talk about what hepatitis C is.

- *Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. Inflammation is a natural way your body reacts when you're hurt or sick.*
- *Hepatitis C is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus.*
- *Hepatitis C is transmitted when the blood of a person with hepatitis C enters the bloodstream of another person*
- *Without treatment hepatitis C can lead to serious liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.*
- *Many people living with hepatitis C don't even know they have it, because it often doesn't cause symptoms until there is significant liver damage.*

Slide 5



Facilitator notes:

Now, let's look at how hepatitis C affects the liver over time.

- The liver is one of the most important organs in our body. It processes nutrients, helps with digestion, and removes toxins from our system. But when the liver is infected with the hepatitis C virus, it can become inflamed and damaged.
- This slide shows the different stages of liver disease caused by hepatitis C.
- Let's go through them stage by stage.

Stage 1: A healthy liver can function normally by breaking down food, storing energy, and helping with digestion.

Stage 2: The second stage shows what happens after infection. This is called acute hepatitis C (*short term*). Soon after the hepatitis C virus enters the body through the blood stream, it attacks the liver cells and cause inflammation of the liver (hepatitis). But in most healthy adults, the immune system can fight off the virus within six months.

Stage 3: In the third stage, the immune system can't get rid of the virus within 6 months and the infection becomes chronic (*long term*). This means the virus remains in the body for a long time, continuing to cause the scarring of the liver. This scarring is called liver fibrosis. At this stage, a person may not have any symptoms, but the damage is slowly progressing.

Stage 4: If chronic hepatitis C is not treated, fibrosis can lead to cirrhosis. Cirrhosis is when so much scarring occurs that the liver can no longer function properly. The liver becomes stiff, making it harder for blood to flow through it, which can lead to liver cancer. At this stage, a person may start experiencing extreme tiredness, swelling in the legs, and / or yellowing of the skin and eyes (also known as jaundice)


Stage 5: And finally, this last image shows that if hepatitis C continues to damage the liver, it can cause serious liver disease or liver cancer. Unfortunately, liver cancer doesn't often show any symptoms until at an advanced stage.

So, it's important for people with hepatitis C to get medical care and regular screening tests.

Does anyone have any questions before we move on to the next slide?

Slide 6

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

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6


Facilitator notes:

Read the slide and add the following:

- *Hepatitis C is transmitted when the blood of a person with hepatitis C virus enters the body of another person. That can happen even when the amount of blood is too small to be seen.*
- *Many people born overseas have been infected through unsterile medical, dental and cosmetic procedures and vaccinations in the past. Even today, hepatitis C can be transmitted in this way in some countries.*
- *Hepatitis C in CALD communities is often acquired at a young age and people may not be aware of their hepatitis status until later in life, resulting in late presentation to health services, and higher risk of developing serious liver disease and liver cancer.*
- *In Australia, the majority of people with hepatitis C have been infected through sharing equipment used to inject drugs e.g. heroin, speed or steroids. Some may have also been infected through blood transfusions before 1990.*
- *If you think you might be at risk of hepatitis C, it's very important to **get tested and know your status.***

Slide 7

You can get hepatitis C from...



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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

Facilitator notes:

This slide goes through the different ways that you can get hepatitis C. Read through the points in the slide.

You can also explain each of the points in the slide in more detail as below:

- *Unsterilised medical, dental and cosmetic procedures and vaccinations overseas when you're not sure the equipment used was sterilised or nor clean: In Australia, these are safe because we have strict infection control procedures in hospitals and dental clinics to prevent this risk.*
- *Unsterile tattooing, body piercing or circumcision: People may also be at risk of getting hepatitis C through traditional or cultural practices that involve blood when non-sterile equipment is used. It is important to ensure that any equipment used is sterilised and handled by trained professionals.*
- *Sharing and reusing any equipment used for injecting drugs or steroids.*
- *Having sex without a condom with someone who has hepatitis C.: The hepatitis C virus can be present in semen, vaginal fluids, and blood. Having unprotected sex increases the risk of infection, particularly for men who have sex with men or people with multiple sexual partners.*
- *Babies can be exposed during pregnancy or childbirth: In about 5% of cases, a pregnant mother who has hepatitis C can transfer the hepatitis C virus to their baby during childbirth. This is called vertical transmission. Breastfeeding is usually safe for mothers who have hepatitis C.*
- *Accidental needle-stick injury*
- *Sharing razor blades, nail clippers, and/or toothbrushes. Hepatitis C virus can survive outside the body for up to seven days, so even a tiny amount of blood on personal items can be enough to spread the virus.*
- *Blood transfusions in Australia before 1990, when blood donations Australia were not routinely screened for hepatitis C. However, today, all donated blood is tested, making blood transfusions in Australia safe.*

Slide 8



Facilitator notes:

We have covered on our previous slide how you can get hepatitis C, now we'll talk about the ways you cannot get hepatitis C virus.

- You don't need to worry about **using the same toilet** or bathroom with someone who has hepatitis C. The virus is not transmitted through toilet seats.
- The hepatitis C virus cannot spread when people **share their food with others** or their eating utensils or drinking glasses. It is safe to eat with someone who has hepatitis C.
- You can't get hepatitis virus by touching other people when you **hug, kiss** or hold hands with them.
- Hepatitis C is blood-borne virus that means it only spreads through blood-to-blood contact. So, you cannot get hepatitis C virus if someone **coughs or sneezes** near you.
- The hepatitis C virus doesn't spread through **mosquito or insect bites**. The virus needs direct blood-to-blood contact or bodily fluids to be passed on.
- Chlorinated water in **swimming pools** kills viruses and bacteria, so hepatitis C cannot be transmitted through shared water in pools or public baths.

Hepatitis C virus is not spread through everyday casual contact with people. People shouldn't feel ashamed or be treated unfairly for having hepatitis C.

Slide 9

The slide is divided into two main sections. The left section has a blue background with white and yellow sunburst graphics. It contains the title 'What are the symptoms of hepatitis C?' in white text. The right section has a white background with a blue border. It contains two green checkmark bullet points, a speech bubble with white text, and an illustration of a woman in a blue hijab and green shirt. The URL 'mhahs.org.au' is in the bottom left corner of the blue section, and a small number '9' is in the bottom right corner of the white section.

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

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Facilitator notes:

Now, let's talk about the symptoms people may have.

- *As we discussed earlier, hepatitis C can be acute (short term) and chronic (long term). It's important to know that many people with hepatitis C may not experience any symptoms for many years. When people do have symptoms, it feels like the flu. Some people may have nausea, extreme tiredness and pain or discomfort around the liver.*
- *Even people with chronic hepatitis C may not feel sick until their liver becomes very damaged. This can take many years.*

The important message I want you to take home from this slide is whether you have symptoms or not, the only way to know if you have hepatitis C is to get tested.

Early diagnosis can help prevent serious complications like liver cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Next, we'll talk about how you can get tested for hepatitis C. Before we move on, does anyone have any questions about symptoms?

Slide 10

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.

Where to get tested

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

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

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Facilitator notes:

Remember that the only way to know if you have hepatitis C is to have a blood test. There are a few ways you can test for hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C test is not part of your regular health check, so you'll need to ask your doctor specifically for a hepatitis C test.

- *The hepatitis C **antibody blood test** shows whether you have ever had hepatitis C. If the test is positive, it means that you have been in contact with the hepatitis C virus – you have it now or had it in the past*
- *Hepatitis C **PCR test** shows if you have the virus now.*

If your test result is positive, it means you have hepatitis C and you must talk to your doctor or nurse how you can get treated and cured.

Now let's have a look at the places you can get a hepatitis C test.

- *You can ask your **General Practitioner (GP)** or doctor for a hepatitis C blood test. Remember that this test is not included in your routine check-ups, so you need to specifically request it.*
 - *The test is free if you have a Medicare Card.*
 - *If your doctor bulk bills, there is no cost for the consultation or the blood test. But if your doctor doesn't bulk bill, you may only need to pay a consultation fee.*
(Bulk-billing is a payment option that patients have under the Medicare system. It allows doctors to bill or charge Medicare directly for their services not the patient.)
 - *If you don't have a doctor or GP, you can visit health direct webpage to find one near your home: www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services*

Slide 10 cont...

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.

Where to get tested

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- ✓ NSW Sexual Health Clinics
- ✓ Online for the DBS test

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

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10

Facilitator notes:


- At **NSW Sexual Health Clinics**, the hepatitis C test is free, easy and confidential.
 - You don't need a Medicare Card to do the test, and you don't need to give your real name if you don't want to.
 - You can find sexual health clinics in various locations around Sydney and NSW. Please, call the **Sexual Health Infolink** on 1800 451 624 or go to the NSW Health website, and search for sexual health clinics to find a clinic near you.
- You can **call Family planning NSW Talkline** on 1300 658 886 if you have any questions about hepatitis C and to book for a hepatitis C test or you can visit their website www.fpnsw.org.au to find a clinic near you.
- You can also do a hepatitis C test at home with the **Dried Blood Spot (DBS) test**. It's a finger stick test that you can order online. You use the small needle provided in the test kit, to collect a few drops of blood from your finger and send it to a laboratory for testing. You get the result in about one week by phone, text or email. If your test is positive, a nurse will call you and tell you where you can go for a hepatitis C blood test. For more information about the DBS test and how to order the kit, visit: www.health.nsw.gov.au/dbstest

Before we move on does anyone have any questions about hepatitis C testing?

Slide 11

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



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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

11

Facilitator notes:

Now, this slide shows who is at higher risk of getting hepatitis C. It means that if you or someone you know falls into this group, even though you don't have symptoms, you should get tested for hepatitis C. This is the only way to know your status.


Most importantly you should get tested if you were born or have lived in a country where hepatitis C is common.

In addition, you should get tested if you:

- *have had a blood transfusion, vaccination, surgery or other medical or dental procedure in another country*
- *have had a traditional medical procedure 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.*

Slide 12

How is hepatitis C treated?



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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

Facilitator notes:

Now that we've talked about testing, let's discuss treatment options for hepatitis C.

- *Hepatitis C treatment is available, and it can get cure hepatitis C.*
- *The medications are called direct-acting antivirals (or DAAs). They are tablets and work well for most people. You'll need to take 1 to 3 tablets for 8 to 12 weeks.*
- *All medicines can have side effects, but hepatitis C DAA treatment have few side-effects for over 95% of people who take them.*
- *These treatments have a 90-95% chance of curing hepatitis C. It's recommended for all people living with hepatitis C*
- *People with cirrhosis or severe liver damage may need longer treatment, up to 24 weeks, depending on their specific case.*
- *Hepatitis C medication is low cost if you have a Medicare card. This means that the Australian government covers most of the cost and you only pay a small amount.*
- *If you don't have a Medicare card, speak to your doctor. They may assist you getting hepatitis C treatments at a lower price.*
- *It is important to talk to your doctor about the best treatment options available, as they can help navigate the costs and eligibility for subsidies.*

IMPORTANT: Explain to your participants about hepatitis C REINFECTION

- *The treatment can cure you from hepatitis C by clearing the virus from your body, but it does not protect you from getting hepatitis C again.*
- *Since there is no vaccine to protect you from hepatitis C, it's important to take precautions to protect yourself from getting infected with the virus again.*

We will discuss on the next slide the ways you can preventing from hepatitis C. Before we move on to the next slide, does anyone have any questions about treatment for hepatitis C?

Slide 13

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



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Facilitator notes:

Unfortunately, there is currently no hepatitis C vaccine available to protect you from hepatitis C. And as we discussed in the previous slide, that even after being cured, you can get hepatitis C again. In this slide we will talk about ways to protect yourself and the others from getting hepatitis C.

- *Don't share personal items like toothbrushes, nail-clippers or razors, because they might have blood on them*
- *Only get tattoos or skin piercings from licensed, trained professionals.*
- *Use accredited professionals when getting medical or dental procedures.*
- *Even though the risk of getting hepatitis C virus through sexual contact is low, it's important to use condoms and lubricants during sex*
- *Avoid getting medical or dental procedures, acupuncture, tattoos and skin piercing overseas*
- *Wear gloves when cleaning up blood or other body fluids*
- *Only use your own or new needles and syringes for injecting drugs or steroids – NEVER SHARE them*

Does anyone have any questions before we move to the next slide?

Slide 14



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 also makes it harder to get healthcare and support

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Facilitator notes:

Now, let's talk about stigma and how it affects people living with hepatitis C.

- Stigma is when people are treated unfairly or judged because of a health condition.
- Unfortunately, many people with hepatitis C experience stigma and discrimination. This is often due to the close association between hepatitis C and unsterile injecting drug use, which the most common mode of transmission in Australia.
- Stigma often comes from misinformation or wrong assumptions about how someone got hepatitis C
- Stigma can have serious impacts on people's lives, including fear of discrimination, delay in getting tested or treated, and emotional distress, anxiety, and depression
- Some people are afraid to share meals or even be near someone with hepatitis C because they mistakenly believe they could get it.
- This misinformation can cause isolation and emotional distress for those living with the virus.
- It is important that we educate ourselves and others to break down these myths.
- If you know someone with hepatitis C you don't need to avoid them or change how you interact with them. Instead, support them to seek medical care and stay on top of their liver health.
- Hepatitis C is not spread through everyday casual contact, by only through blood-to-blood contact.
- No one should feel ashamed or be treated unfairly for having hepatitis C.
- We all should help reduce stigma and discrimination by creating a supportive environment for those living with hepatitis C. It's about treating everyone with kindness, respect, and understanding.
- In Australia it is against the law for any health care professional to discriminate against you or refuse you service just because you have hepatitis C

Next, we'll talk about disclosing hepatitis C status, that means who to tell or not tell about your hepatitis C. But before we move on, does anyone have any questions about what we've just covered?

Slide 15

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

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Facilitator notes:

This slide shows two situations. The one on the left are circumstances where you are legally required to tell that you have hepatitis C, and the other one is when you don't really have to tell.

We're going through the circumstances when, by law, you must tell that you have hepatitis C:

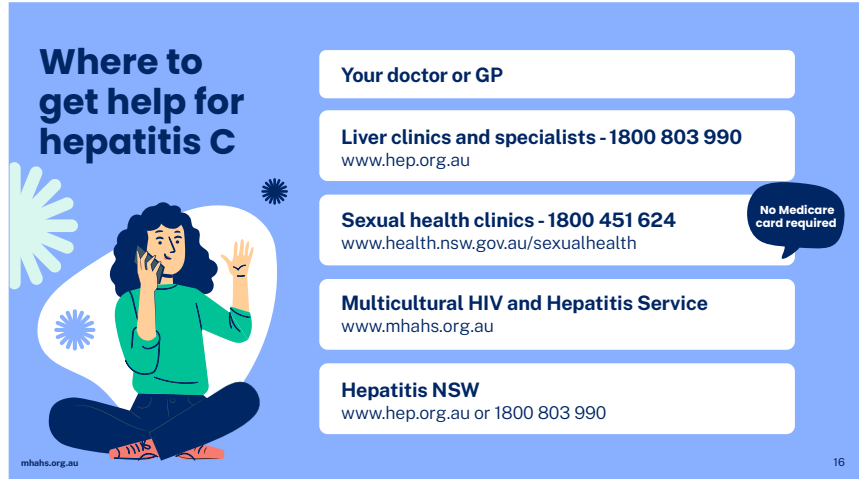
- *When you give blood: Blood banks need to know your blood is safe. The same applies when you donate organs or sperm.*
- *When you apply for some types of insurance, such as life insurance.*
- *If you want to join the Australian Defence Force – This is part of the mandatory medical check-up.*
- *When you apply for a visa to live in Australia – As part of the medical requirements*
- *If you are a healthcare worker who performs certain medical procedures – This includes surgeries, dental work, or any procedure where there is a risk of transmission*

There are many situations where you do NOT have to tell people you have hepatitis C including:

- *Your employer or boss – You are not required to tell your workplace*
- *Colleagues or classmates – The people you work or study with do not need to know*
- *Your family, friends and sexual partners BUT it's a good idea to let them know, so they can get tested and vaccinated as well.*
- *Healthcare professionals, including your dentist – They already follow strict safety procedures to prevent infections from any bloodborne viruses.*

Does anyone have any questions?

Slide 16



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

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

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

No Medicare card required

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Facilitator notes:

We have covered a lot of important information about hepatitis C today, and this slide shows the information about where you can get help if you need it.

- *Your GP or doctor is a good starting point. You can ask them for a hepatitis C blood test and discuss any concerns you may have.*
- *If you have been diagnosed or tested positive for hepatitis C your doctor will refer you to a liver specialist for ongoing monitoring and treatment. You can find a specialist or liver clinic by calling the Hepatitis Infoline at 1800 803 990 or visiting this webpage: www.hep.org.au/key-services/nsw-directory You will still need a referral from your doctor.*
- *At the **NSW Sexual Health Clinics**, you can get tested for hepatitis C which is free, easy, and confidential. At these clinics, you don't need a Medicare card, and you don't have to give your real name if you don't want to. To find a clinic near you, call the NSW Sexual Health Infoline at 1800 451 624 or visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/Pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx*
- *If English is not your first language, you can find information about hepatitis C in other languages and support through the **Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service** by visiting this website: mhahs.org.au.*
- *You can visit the **Hepatitis NSW** website for more information on hepatitis C. This is a non-profit organisation that provides support and resources for people living with hepatitis C in NSW.*

If you or someone you know needs support, help is available. The most important step is getting tested and staying informed.

Does anyone have any questions before we move on?

Slide 17

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



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Facilitator notes:


If you or someone you know does not speak English, you still have full access to health services in Australia.

You can call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on this number on the slide: 13 14 50.

- *It is a free service.*
- *All you have to do is to call this number (13 14 50), say the language you need and an interpreter will help you communicate with a health service.*
- *You can request an interpreter when you need to speak to a doctor or specialist.*
- *You can ask the receptionist at any healthcare service to book a free interpreter for you*
- *All public health services in Australia can arrange an interpreter for you.*
You can also use TIS to book an appointment with a GP or specialist.

Slide 18

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.

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Facilitator notes:

Now, let's see how much we've learnt today in this workshop. Let's do a quick quiz.

I will read out these statements and I want you to raise your hand and tell me if they are TRUE or FALSE.

This is just for fun, there are no wrong answers.

The goal is to see what we remember from today's session.

- *You can get hepatitis C from kissing someone who has the hepatitis C virus.*

Answer: FALSE – Reason: Hepatitis C is only passed on through blood-to-blood contact. This happens when the blood of someone infected with hep C gets into someone else's blood stream.

- *Hepatitis C is passed on to others by sharing food.*

Answer: FALSE – Reason: Again, hepatitis C is only passed on through blood-to-blood contact. This happens when the blood of someone infected with hep C gets into someone else's blood stream.

- *You can protect yourself from getting hepatitis C by getting vaccinated.*

Answer: FALSE – Reason: There is no vaccine for hepatitis C yet, but you can get treated and cured with medication. There is vaccination for hepatitis B and people who have not been vaccinated should talk to their doctor about whether a hepatitis B vaccination is recommended.

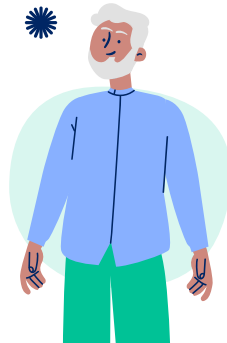
- *You have had a tattoo overseas and are not sure that equipment used was clean, you should you get tested.*

Answer: TRUE – Reason: Because hepatitis C can be found in unsterilized or not clean equipment for tattooing, piercing, and injecting drugs.

Slide 19

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



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Facilitator notes:

We've covered a lot of information today about hepatitis C, but before we finish, here are 5 important messages I really want you to take home with you:

- *Hepatitis C is a liver infection caused by the hepatitis C virus.*
- *You can only get hepatitis C from blood-to-blood contact.*
- *It's very important to get treated and cured for hepatitis C because it can cause serious liver damage and liver cancer*
- *You need to get tested to know if you have it. Many people don't know they have hepatitis C because they don't experience any symptoms.*
- *Fortunately, there is treatment and cure for hepatitis C, but there is still no vaccination available to protect you against the virus.*

Thank you for your time today! If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Slide 20

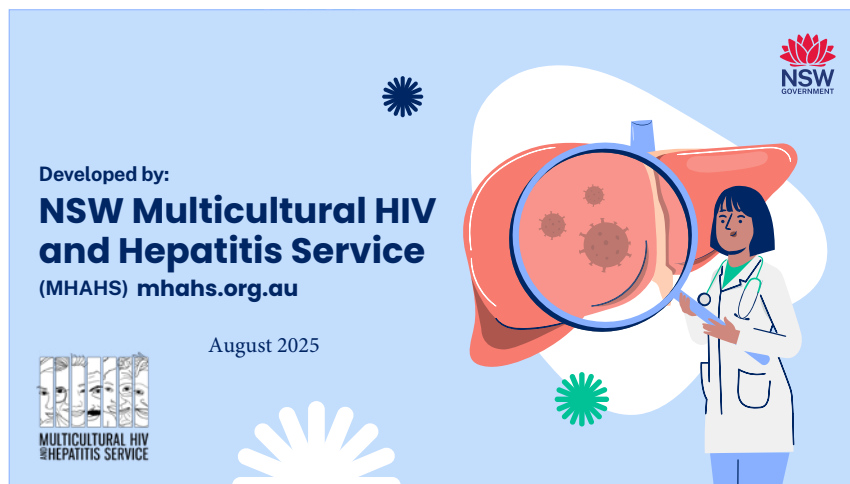


Facilitator notes:

Are there any final questions?

Thank you everyone. We hope that you can take some of the information you learnt today and pass it on to your communities.

Slide 21

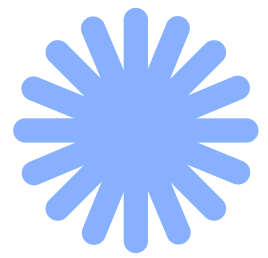


The MHAHS supports people from diverse cultural and language backgrounds across New South Wales to address HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and sexual health. It works with communities to provide information, education, and support to improve access to health care for all.

The MHAHS also partners with health services and community organisations to provide culturally tailored health education and multilingual programs to empower communities with knowledge and tools they need to navigate the health care system confidently.

Email: info@mhahs.org.au

Website – multilingual information on HIV, hepatitis B and C, STIs and liver health



Sample Evaluation Form

Topic.....

Date..... Language.....

Age..... Gender.....

1. Did the speaker explain things in a way you could understand?

☐ Yes, always ☐ Yes, sometimes ☐ No

2. Did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity
(e.g. with courtesy, care and kindness) while you were in the session?

☐ Yes, always ☐ Yes, sometimes ☐ No

3. Would you recommend this session to a friend or family?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. What is one thing you have learnt from this session?

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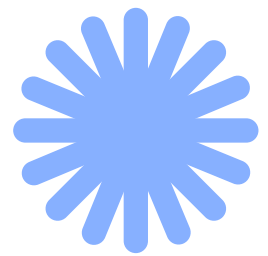
5. Do you have any comments or suggestions?

.....

.....

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Glossary

Abdomen: the part of the body that holds the stomach, liver, bowels, and reproductive organs.

Acute: a sickness or symptom that happens quickly or lasts a short time. Flu and urine infections are examples of an acute illness. Some people with a very serious acute illness can die.

Antibody: something that your immune system makes to fight things that are not normally part of the body, like viruses, germs. The body can remember some antibodies and that helps keep us protected from infection.

Blood-borne: It refers to diseases or infections that can pass from one person to another through blood, like hepatitis B and C. These infections can spread also through things like sharing needles, blood transfusions, cuts and wounds coming into contact with infected blood.

Blood-to-blood contact: it happens when the blood from one person mixes with the blood of another person. It can spread blood-borne diseases like hepatitis B and C, HIV.

Blood transfusion: is a medical procedure where blood is given to a person through a small tube in the arm.

Bulk billing: if your doctor bulk bills, your visit is free because Medicare pays the doctor. If your doctor does not bulk bill, you pay the doctor and then you claim some money back from Medicare.

Chronic: a disease or symptom that lasts for a long time, usually months or years, and often doesn't go away completely.

Cirrhosis: scarring of the liver because of injury or long-term disease. Scar tissue cannot perform the functions of liver tissue, so your liver function is not as good as it needs to be.

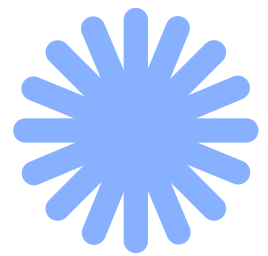
Condoms: a thin rubber (latex) bag which fits on a man's erect penis to stop pregnancy, and reduce the chance of passing on sexually transmissible infections (STIs) or viruses.

Confidentiality: means keeping personal information private and not sharing it without permission. Medical confidentiality means anything you tell your doctor or nurse must, by law, be kept private between the two of you and the organisation they work for.

Consent: means to 'agree' to something. Another word for consent is 'permission'. When a person agrees to do something without anyone forcing them to do it, they are consenting to it. It's, for example, when a patient agrees to a medical procedure, treatment, or test after being explained what it involves.

DAAs: it stands for Direct Acting Antivirals. They are a type of medication taken by mouth (oral) to treat hepatitis C.

Diagnosis: the conclusion a doctor may reach after examining, doing tests and talking with their patients.



Glossary

Diarrhea: is when you have frequent, loose, or watery stools three or more times a day. It usually lasts for a short time, but it can be persistent, lasting a long time. It can be caused by infections or certain food or medications.

Fibrosis: is when tissues in the body becomes thick and scarred.

Immune system: The body's system for fighting infections and disease. HIV destroys part of the immune system so that a person with HIV is less able to fight off infections.

Inflammation: when there is inflammation in your body, you might see a change in the skin colour or a swelling. It happens when your body tries to heal or fight off bacteria and viruses.

Jaundice: is when the whites of your eyes and the skin look yellow. It happens when your liver cannot work as well as normal.

Infection: a sickness you get from germs. Infections can be caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites.

Hepatitis: An inflammation of the liver due to viruses or drug or alcohol use.

Liver: The largest organ inside your body. It sits at the top right side of the stomach. It helps to digest food, store energy, and take away poisons of drugs and alcohol from your body.

Liver cancer: is a disease where not normal cells grow out of control in the liver, causing a harmful tumour.

Loss of appetite: not feeling hungry or having little to no desire to eat.

Medication: is a drug or medicine used to treat diseases and other health conditions.

Nausea: when you have an upset stomach or feel like throwing up.

PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test: A PCR test helps doctors confirm if the hepatitis C virus is present and how much of it is in the body. It's useful for doctors to decide the best hepatitis C treatment.

Side effect: a possible negative reaction to medication or treatment.

Steroid: a kind of drug or medicine that stops swelling and pain. It helps your body's natural defence against sickness (your immune system).

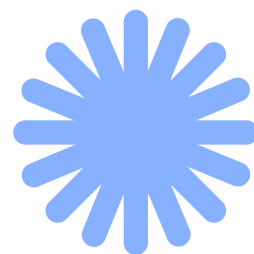
Symptom: a sign of disease or sickness. It's something that is different in your body that might mean you have sickness. Symptoms help doctors and nurses work out what the sickness is.

Toxin: harmful substances, poison.

Transmission: the passing of a disease from one person to another.

Treatment: something that a person does so that they can stay healthy or get better. It can involve taking medicine, or other therapy to treat or cure a disease, and/or change in lifestyle.

Unsterile: something that is not clean or free of germs, bacteria, or viruses



Links to further information and resources

These are links to websites you can use to find more information on hepatitis C:

Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS) works with CALD communities in NSW to improve health and wellbeing in relation to HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and sexual health. MHAHS works with 20 language groups to implement a range of health promotion, community development and media initiatives.

www.mhahs.org.au

ASHM provides support to the HIV, viral hepatitis and sexual health workforce. The website includes up to date information on HIV, hepatitis and sexual health.

www.ashm.org.au

Hepatitis Australia is a peak community organisation that focusses on issues of importance to people affected by hepatitis B and hepatitis C. The Hepatitis Australia website provides a variety of information about viral hepatitis in plain English and other languages.

www.hepatitisaustralia.com

Multicultural Health Communication Service is a NSW statewide health service that coordinates multilingual health information.

www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au

Hepatitis NSW is a community organisation that works to improve the health and wellbeing, or communities affected by hepatitis B and hepatitis C

www.hep.org.au

Translating and Interpreters Service is a national interpreting services for people with limited English proficiency and for agencies and businesses that need to communicate with their non-English speaking clients.

www.tisnational.gov.au

Hepatitis Queensland is a community organisation that strives to improve the lives of Queenslanders affected by viral hepatitis and liver disease via education, collaboration, and person-centred care initiatives

www.hepqld.asn.au

Healthdirect Australia is a national virtual health information service.

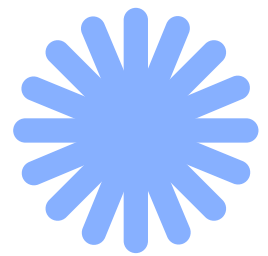
www.healthdirect.gov.au

The International Student Health Hub was developed to improve access to sexual and reproductive health information and services for international students in NSW. It covers topics including, sexual and reproductive health, overseas student health cover, the Australian Health Care System, relationships, contraception and pregnancy, and more!

www.internationalstudents.health.nsw.gov.au

Department of Health Victoria – Better Health Channel provides health and medical information to improve the wellbeing of people and the communities they live in.

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These are some of the common questions that people from CALD backgrounds may have about hepatitis C which may have not been covered in the content of this education session.

What are the main differences between hepatitis B and hepatitis C?

Hepatitis B is most often passed on from mother to baby during childbirth. The virus lives in blood and sexual fluids. There is no cure for hepatitis B but there is a vaccine. You can live a healthy life with hepatitis B, with 6-monthly visits to your doctor.

Hepatitis C is only passed on through blood-to-blood contact, when blood from someone with hepatitis C virus gets into someone else's bloodstream. It's easily cured and there is no vaccine for hepatitis C.

Can I still get pregnant if I have hepatitis C?

Yes, you can. Hepatitis C won't affect your ability to become pregnant. There is only a very small chance your baby will be born with hepatitis C. If your baby is born with a hepatitis C infection, there is a 50% chance that they will clear the infection naturally.

Can I still breastfeed if I have hepatitis C?

Yes, you can. Hepatitis C is not transmitted through breast milk as long as you don't have cuts or bleeding nipples. It is passed on through blood-to-blood contact only.

Is hepatitis C common?

Yes. Around 50 million people worldwide are living with chronic hepatitis C and close to 42,000 in NSW but many don't know they have it. The highest risk group for hepatitis C in NSW are people who inject drugs or have a history of injecting drugs.

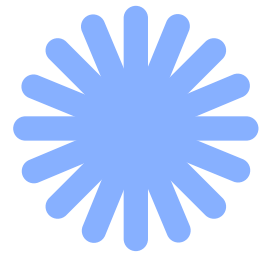
Is hepatitis C related to HIV/AIDS? They are related in the sense that both are viral infections, transmitted through bodily fluids, but hepatitis C is only transmitted through blood. Both viruses can spread through sexual contact. Both are treatable with medication, but hepatitis C can be cured, and HIV can be treated but it cannot be cured yet.

Can I be vaccinated for hepatitis C in Australia?

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C yet.

Should I tell Immigration that I have hepatitis C during my visa application process?

It is important to answer honestly during a visa application process. Do not give any false information to the Immigration Department. Hepatitis C is not listed as a threat to public health as HIV and hepatitis B are.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do I need to tell anyone that I am taking medication for hepatitis C?

No, you don't. It's important to check that any other medication you take will not mix with the hepatitis C medication.

Is it safe to take herbal medicines or traditional Chinese medicines if I have hepatitis C?

It depends on the medicine. But you should always talk to your doctor first, because some of these medicines can harm your liver.

Can hepatitis C virus be transmitted through saliva? Can I get it through kissing?

Hepatitis C is only spreads through blood-to-blood contact, not from saliva, sweat, tears.