

What Works



Tips for taking care
of yourself if you
have Hep C or HIV
and inject drugs

 **CATIE**

Do you have HIV or Hep C? Do you inject drugs?

*If you answered yes, this booklet is for you.
Keep reading!*

What are Hep C and HIV?

Hep C is an infection that attacks your liver. It is in your blood.

HIV is also an infection in your blood. It is also in some other body fluids. HIV makes it difficult for your body to fight infections. That means you can get sick more easily and more often.

Hep C and HIV are diseases that can make you very sick if you do not get health care for them.

This booklet has information on **how to take care of yourself and keep others safe** if you have Hep C or HIV and inject drugs.



Finding out you have Hep C or HIV can be difficult.

Give yourself some time to take in the news.

Talking to a friend or family member may help.

Lots of people can stay healthy and live for a long time with Hep C or HIV.

When you are ready, here are some things you can do:

- Talk to a nurse or health worker.
- Talk to other people who are living with Hep C or HIV.
- Ask your doctor about treatment for Hep C or HIV.

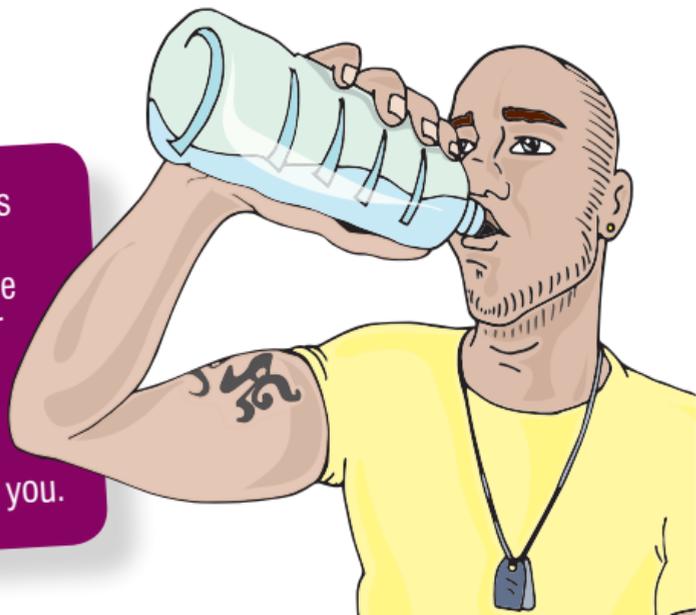


Things you can do to stay healthy

Having Hep C or HIV is hard on your body, but you can do many things to stay healthy. You can:

- Drink water
- Sleep enough
- Eat as well as you can
- Talk to someone about how you are feeling

Using drugs, smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol are also hard on your body. Some people decide to change their use after they find out they have Hep C or HIV. Talk to a nurse or a health worker if you want to make a change. They can help you.



Taking medicines for Hep C or HIV

There are medicines that can treat Hep C. These medicines can cure Hep C.

There are medicines that can treat HIV. They can't cure HIV but they can help you stay healthy for a long time.

To learn more about these treatments, talk to a doctor, nurse or support worker.

CATIE has another booklet called *Treat Me Right* that has information about treatment for people who have Hep C or HIV and inject drugs.



Getting tested regularly

Hep C and HIV can pass from one person to another in the same way.

So, if you already know you have Hep C, it's a good idea to get tested regularly for HIV. If you know you have HIV, it's a good idea to get tested regularly for Hep C.

You may also want to get tested for Hep A, Hep B and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) regularly.

A nurse or doctor at a clinic can give you these tests. They can also tell you how often to get tested.

To find out where to get tested, ask your health worker or call CATIE at 1-800-263-1638.



Tips for getting a blood test if you have bad veins

The tests for Hep C and HIV are blood tests. Getting blood tests can be difficult if you have bad veins, but there are things you can do to make the test easier:

- Show the nurse or doctor your best veins.
- Warm your body by taking a shower and wearing warm clothes to your blood test.
- Drink 2 or 3 glasses of water 1 or 2 hours before your test.
- Ask for a finger-prick test for HIV.
- Bring a friend for support.



How Hep C and HIV pass from person to person



Hep C and HIV are in the blood.



Hep C or HIV can pass from one person to another when people share equipment for injecting drugs (works).



Hep C or HIV can pass from one person to another when people share crack pipes.



Hep C or HIV can also pass from one person to another when somebody gets a piercing or a tattoo if the artist does not sterilize the tools or the artist re-uses ink.



HIV is in cum, pre-cum, vaginal fluid or pussy juice, and anal fluid or bum juice. This means that HIV can pass from one person to another during sex without a condom.

It is not very likely to get Hep C from having sex.



Hep C is different from HIV because Hep C can pass from one person to another when people share razors, toothbrushes or nail clippers.

Hep C and HIV are **not** in spit, sweat or tears. These viruses **cannot** be passed by things like handshakes, kisses, coughs, swimming pools, toilet seats, towels, forks, cups, food or animals.

Taking care while injecting drugs

If you inject drugs, try not to borrow or lend any equipment for injecting drugs (works). It may have blood that has Hep C or HIV in it.

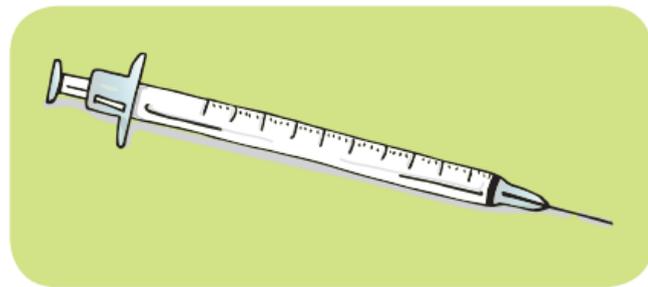
The blood on the equipment could be too small to see.

If you use all new equipment all the time, there is NO chance of passing on or getting Hep C or HIV while injecting drugs.

Here are 2 other good reasons to use new equipment:

- New needles are sharp and less likely to hurt your veins.
- Using new equipment helps make sure you do not get sick from blood clots, cotton fever and other infections.

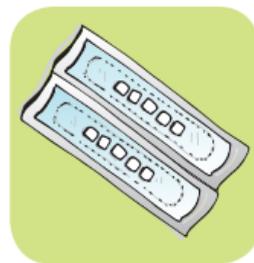
All these things should be new:



Needle



Cooker



Filters



Vitamin C powder or citric acid



Sterile water



Alcohol swabs



Your tie (tourniquet) does not need to be new every time if you are the only one using it. Get a new tie if you see any blood or dirt on your tie.

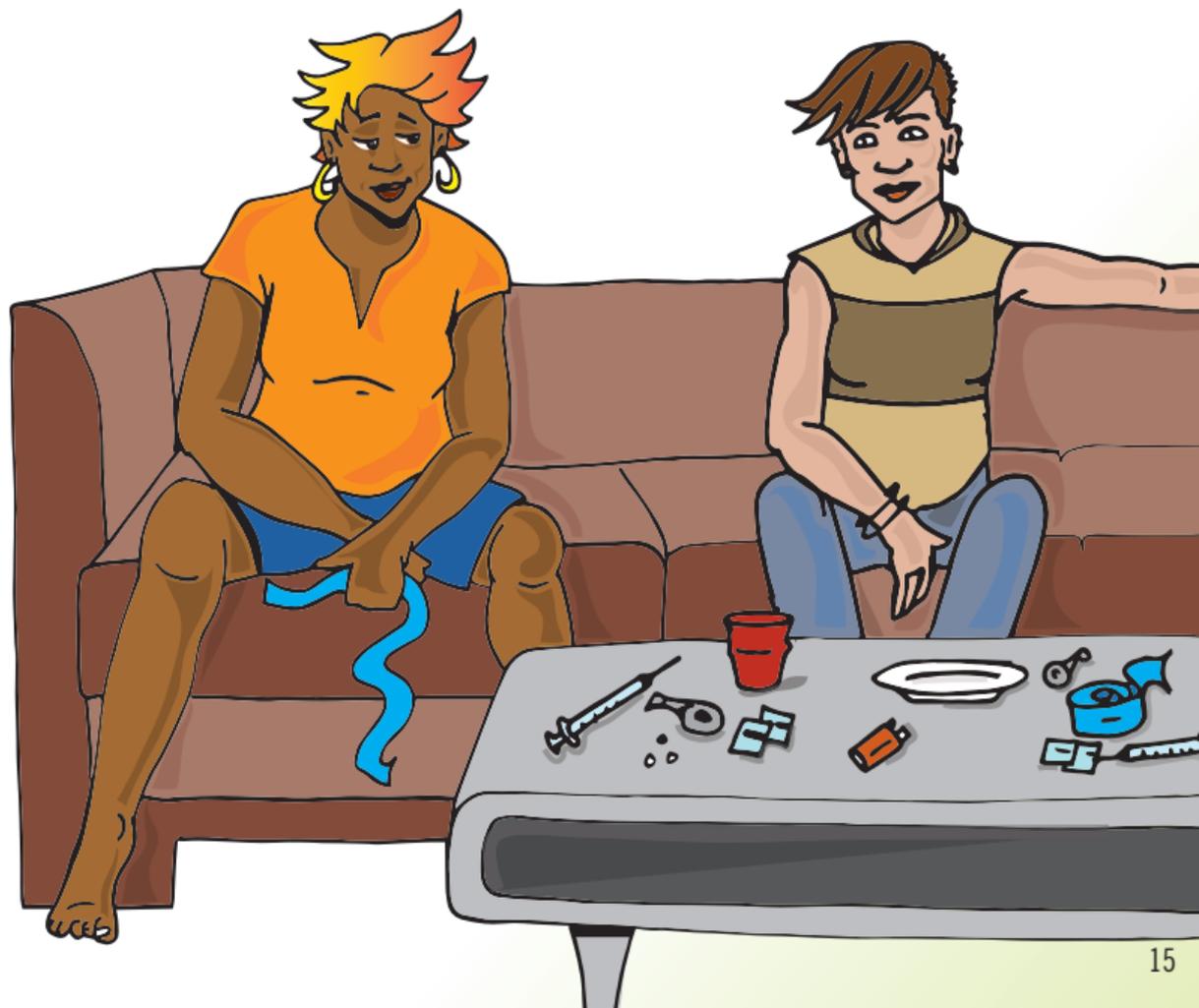
Being in control of when and how you get high

If you need someone else to get you high, you may go into withdrawal because you cannot get high when you need to.

Try to take control over how and when you get high.

To have more control over your drug use:

- Learn how to inject yourself. If there is a street nurse in your community, he or she can show you how.
- Know your dealer so you can buy your own drugs if you need to.
- Try to use with people you trust and in a place where you don't feel rushed.



Being safe when getting a tattoo or piercing

Whether you are getting a tattoo or piercing at a professional studio, at home or in prison, it's safest when the artist uses:

- A sterile tattoo machine or piercing equipment
- New needles
- New ink
- New ink pots
- New latex or vinyl gloves

If the artist works in a professional studio, make sure they have a special machine called an autoclave, which sterilizes equipment.



Staying safe when you have sex

HIV can pass from person to person during sex.

It is rare for Hep C to pass during sex.

There are lots of ways to be safer when you have sex.



Use the ways that are best for you.

- Blow jobs or going down on someone (oral sex) is safer than pussy fucking (vaginal sex) or butt fucking (anal sex) or frontal sex.
- Keep some condoms, lube and dental dams around to use when you have sex.
- In general, people with HIV who take HIV medicines are less likely to pass HIV during sex. Your doctor can tell you more.

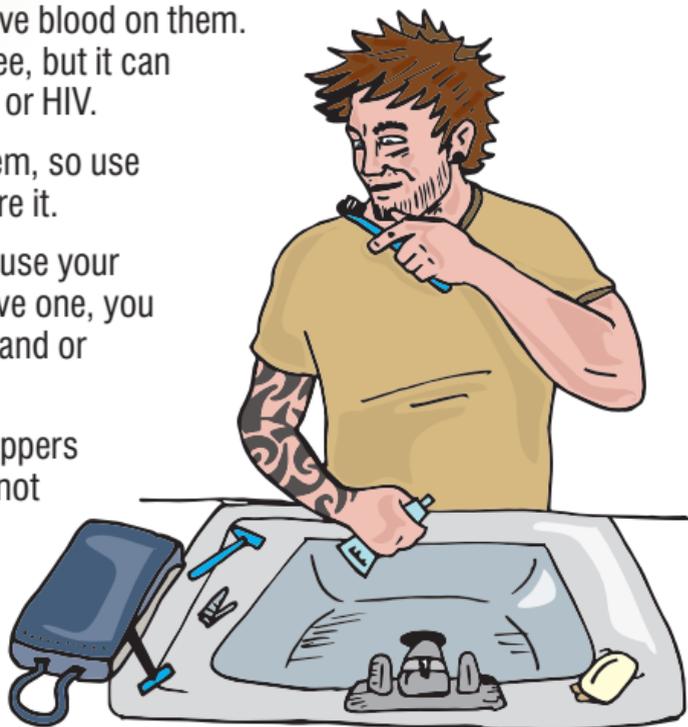
Other ways to stay safe

Hep C or HIV can pass from person to person when people share items that have blood on them. The blood may be too small to see, but it can still be enough to pass on Hep C or HIV.

Crack pipes can get blood on them, so use your own pipe and try not to share it.

If you don't have your own pipe, use your own mouthpiece. If you don't have one, you can make one out of an elastic band or electrical tape.

Toothbrushes, razors and nail clippers can also get blood on them. Try not to share them.



Thinking about having a baby?

If you have HIV or Hep C and are thinking about having a baby, talk to a nurse or doctor.

If you have HIV or Hep C and think you are pregnant, talk to a nurse or doctor.

The chance of Hep C passing to your baby when you are pregnant is very low.

HIV can pass to your baby during pregnancy, birth and nursing. The good news is that with care and treatment, you can have an HIV-negative baby.



Where can you get more information about Hep C or HIV?

Talk to:

- a doctor
- a nurse
- a support worker
- or call CATIE, 1-800-263-1638 or go to www.catie.ca



Canada's source for
HIV and hepatitis C
information

www.catie.ca • 1-800-263-1638 •   @CATIEinfo

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What Works: Tips for taking care of yourself if you have Hep C or HIV and inject drugs

CATIE Ordering Centre No: ATI-70125 (Aussi disponible en français : ATI-70126)

Treat Me Right: Getting treated for Hep C or HIV if you inject drugs

CATIE Ordering Centre No: ATI-70125_B (Aussi disponible en français : ATI-70126_B)