

Treat Me Right



Getting treated for
hepatitis C or HIV
if you inject drugs

 **CATIE**

*Do you have HIV or hepatitis C?
Do you inject drugs?*

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

Lots of people who inject drugs have hepatitis C (Hep C). Some people who inject drugs have HIV. This booklet has information on **Hep C and HIV treatment** for people who inject drugs and have Hep C or HIV.

CATIE also has another booklet called *What Works* about how to take care of your health if you have Hep C or HIV and inject drugs.

Treatment can help you.

Hep C and HIV can make you very sick if you do not do anything about them.

One of the things you can do to take care of your health is to get treatment for Hep C or HIV.

Hep C and HIV are treated with medicines.

You can get treated for Hep C or HIV, even if you use drugs.

Remember, you have the right to be treated with respect by doctors, nurses, and other health workers. You can ask harm reduction workers or other people who use drugs about which doctors and nurses are good to work with.



Hep C treatment

Treatment cures almost everyone of Hep C. If you have Hep C, you should talk to your doctor about your treatment options. For most people, treatment means taking one pill once a day for two to three months.

After being cured, many of the health problems with Hep C get better or go away completely.







HIV treatment

If you have HIV, you need treatment. The sooner you start treatment, the better your chances of staying healthy (or getting healthy again if HIV has made you sick). For many people, treatment means taking one pill once a day.

Treatment cannot cure HIV, and it is a life-long commitment. But it can help you stay healthy for a long time, and it can lower the chance of passing HIV on to someone else.



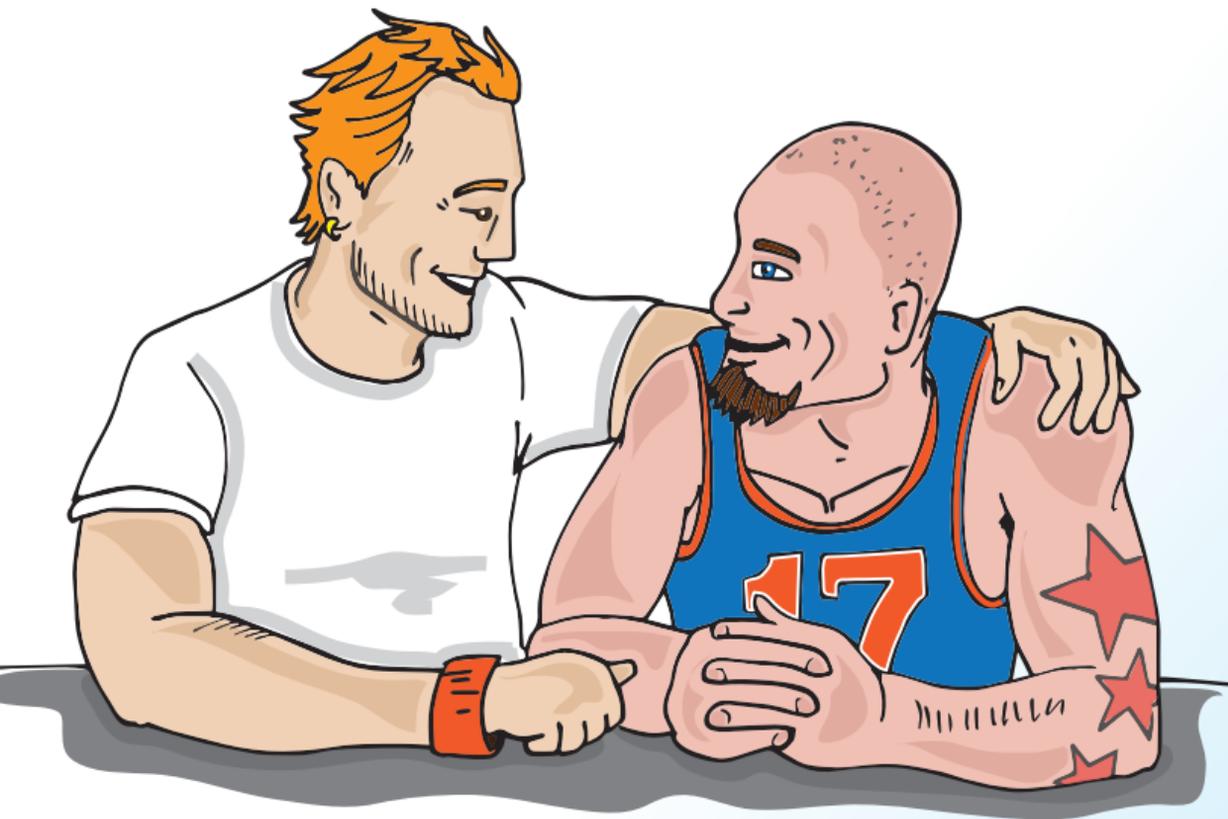
Getting ready to start treatment

Treatment is easier when you have a home, know people who can take care of you and have a plan to remember to take your medicine every day. But if you don't have all of these things, you can still take treatment.

Need help but not sure who to ask?

Talk to a nurse, doctor or support worker who knows about treatment.

They can help you.





Having problems with your treatment?

If you are having problems with your treatment, talk to your health worker. He or she can help you. Getting treated for Hep C or HIV means that you have to take medicines every day. Remembering to take your medicines every day can be difficult. But if you forget to take your medicines, your treatment may not work. If HIV medicines stop working, you may need to switch medicines.

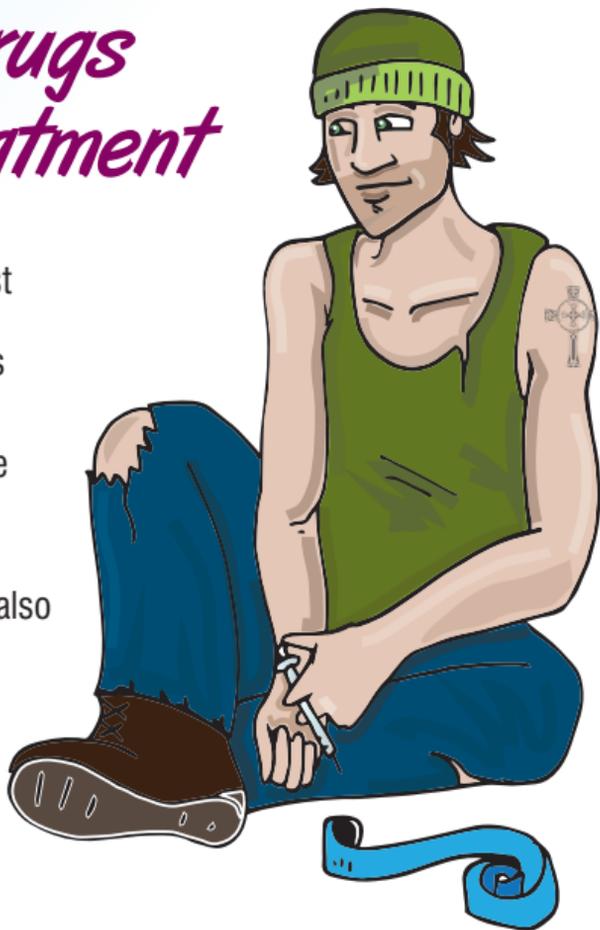
You may have side effects with your treatment. These side effects often get easier to handle after you have been on treatment for a while. There are many ways you can handle these problems and stay on your treatment.

Using street drugs and taking treatment

If you are being treated for Hep C or HIV and you use drugs, be as honest as you can with your pharmacist and doctor about all the street drugs and medicines you are taking.

Some street drugs can make it more difficult for HIV or Hep C medicines to work.

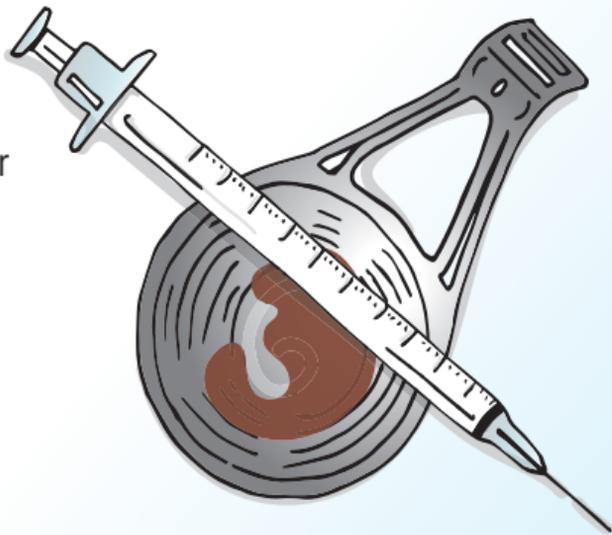
Methadone and buprenorphine can also change how your medicines for HIV or Hep C work. Tell your HIV or Hep C doctor if you are taking methadone or buprenorphine.



Preventing an overdose

Some HIV and Hep C medicines can make the effects of street drugs stronger, which can cause you to overdose. The first time you use street drugs after you start treatment for Hep C or HIV, start slowly. Try half a hit and see how you feel. Use drugs with someone you trust.

Naloxone helps treat an opiate overdose and can save someone's life. If naloxone is available where you live and you want to learn how to use it, talk to a harm reduction worker about how to get training.



Getting treatment in prison

If you are at risk of being arrested or going to prison, you may want to keep your doctor's phone or fax numbers on you.

You may also want to memorize the names of all your medicines. Then you will be able to tell the prison's health workers which medicines you take.

If you are being treated for Hep C or HIV, you have the right to keep getting treatment in prison. Your treatment should not be stopped when you go to prison.

If you have questions or need support for HIV or Hep C treatment in prison, you can call PASAN. PASAN is a group that supports prisoners living with HIV and/or Hep C. You can call PASAN collect at 416-920-9567 or 1-866-224-9978 from a federal prison.



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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Information in this booklet is not medical advice. Decisions about treatment should always be made with the advice of a doctor who knows about HIV or Hep C. Treatments change, so talk to a doctor to get the latest information. Information on safer drug use is not intended to promote the use or possession of street drugs.

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)

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)