

# Hepatitis C and Pregnancy

Hep C is the short name for **hepatitis C**, a blood disease that can hurt your liver.

## Can hep C affect my pregnancy?

Yes. See your provider if:

- Your hands, feet, or other parts of your body itch **without** a rash. This may be a sign of cholestasis (ko-lee-STAY-sis) of pregnancy. It puts your baby at risk for early birth and other problems.
- You gain a lot of weight. This may raise your risk of diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes).

## Can my baby get hep C from me?

Only about **4 babies in 100** get hep C from their mothers. It **doesn't** matter if you have a C-section or not.

These things increase your baby's risk of getting the virus from you:

- Having a lot of hep C in your blood
- When your water breaks more than 6 hours before your baby is born

## How do people get hep C?

Most people get hep C from:

- Shooting drugs with shared syringes or needles, OR
- Getting a homemade tattoo with dirty tools or ink.

It is less likely to get hep C from:

- Having sex with someone who has hep C
- Sharing personal items such as razors or toothbrushes

Hep C does **not** spread by hugging or holding hands. It **doesn't** spread by sharing spoons, forks, or drinking glasses either.



## How will I know if I have hep C?

Blood testing is the only way to know for sure if you have hep C. Your provider may order one or more of these tests for you:

- Antibody test: This test shows if you have **ever** had hep C. But it **doesn't** tell if you have it right now.
- PCR test: This test shows if you have hep C right now.
- Other blood tests check your liver for damage from the virus.

## How can hep C affect my health?

- Without treatment, 15-25% of people clear, or get over, the virus. Up to 30-40% of young women will clear the hep C virus.
- Over many years, hep C can cause scarring (cirrhosis) of the liver. This happens to 10-20% of patients with long term (chronic) hep C.
- Of those people with scarring, 1-5% may get liver cancer.

## What can I do to stay healthy with hep C?

- ☑ Don't drink wine, beer, or spirits. They can hurt your liver. (Pregnant moms should **never** drink alcohol.)
- ☑ Some medicines can hurt your liver. The most common one is Tylenol, or acetaminophen. Don't take more than 2000 mg of Tylenol a day if you have hep C. (That's 6 tablets of 325mg each, or 4 tablets of 500mg each.)
- ☑ Some cold and flu medicines have Tylenol, too. These count towards your daily dose. Always check with your provider before taking any medicine.

## Is there a cure for hep C?

There are some new treatments for hep C. These treatments have cured a lot of patients.

You may be able to get treatment if:

- You have **not** used street drugs for at least 6 months and are healthy.
- You are **not** pregnant or breastfeeding.

---

**Questions? Call your health care provider!**

---



Blood testing is the only way to know for sure if you have hep C.



Drinking wine, beer, or spirits can hurt your liver *and* your unborn baby.