



South Central Public Health District

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Twin Falls 737-5900 * Burley 678-8221 * Gooding 934-4477 * Bellevue 788-4335 * Jerome 324-8838 * Rupert 436-7185

HEPATITIS C

What is hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a liver infection caused by a virus. It is not the same as hepatitis A (also called “infectious hepatitis”) or hepatitis B (also called “serum hepatitis”).

What are the symptoms?

Most people do not have symptoms. If a person becomes ill, symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, fever, belly pain, feeling very tired, dark-colored urine and yellow skin and eyes (jaundice).

When do symptoms appear?

Most people do not have symptoms of hepatitis C. If a person becomes ill, symptoms will appear from two weeks up to six months after the virus enter the body.

How is it spread?

Hepatitis C is spread by contact with the blood and body fluids of people who have it; e.g., by sharing needles used to inject drugs or through blood transfusion before 1990. There is a low risk that hepatitis C virus can be spread by sexual contact or that a pregnant woman with hepatitis C will pass it to her baby. Hepatitis C is not spread through food, by touching someone who has it or by coughing or sneezing.

What is the contagious period?

A large percentage of people with hepatitis C will carry the virus in their blood for many months or years. Usually, people are only infectious for a short time; it depends on how active the disease is in their body.

Who can catch it?

Anyone who has contact with blood or body fluids of a person with hepatitis C may be infected.

How can hepatitis C be prevented?

Do not share needles or drug injection equipment (needles, cotton, water); do not share razors, toothbrushes or other items that could be contaminated with blood from a person who has hepatitis C.

If you have hepatitis C...

Do not donate blood, blood products, organs, tissue or semen.
Use condoms if you have more than one sex partner.

What is the treatment?

A few people with hepatitis C have serious liver disease and may receive a drug called alpha interferon. However, this drug is very expensive and only works for about half the people who take it and must be taken for a long time.