



Q&A  
questions answers

## Q: Is there a cure for hepatitis C?

**A:** Unfortunately, there is no cure for hepatitis C. However, there are therapies that can help fight the virus. Therapy usually works by reducing the amount of virus in the blood and/or helping to reduce liver damage.

**If left untreated, hepatitis C can cause even more serious health problems.** So, if you have hepatitis C, talk with your doctor about which medication may be best for you.

## Q: How can I stop the spread of hepatitis C?

**A:** If you have or suspect that you have hepatitis C, you can help stop its spread by taking these safety measures:

- Advise anyone (eg, sexual partner, doctor, dentist) who may come in contact with your blood or body fluids that you have hepatitis C
- Don't share any personal hygiene items (eg, razors, nail files, toothbrushes)
- Carefully throw out items that may contain your blood or body fluids (eg, tissues, swabs, tampons)
- Clean cuts and wounds with disinfectants and cover with bandages
- Avoid sexual practices that may cause contact with blood
- **DO NOT** donate blood, organs, bone marrow, eggs or semen

For more information, see your doctor.



Pharmaceuticals

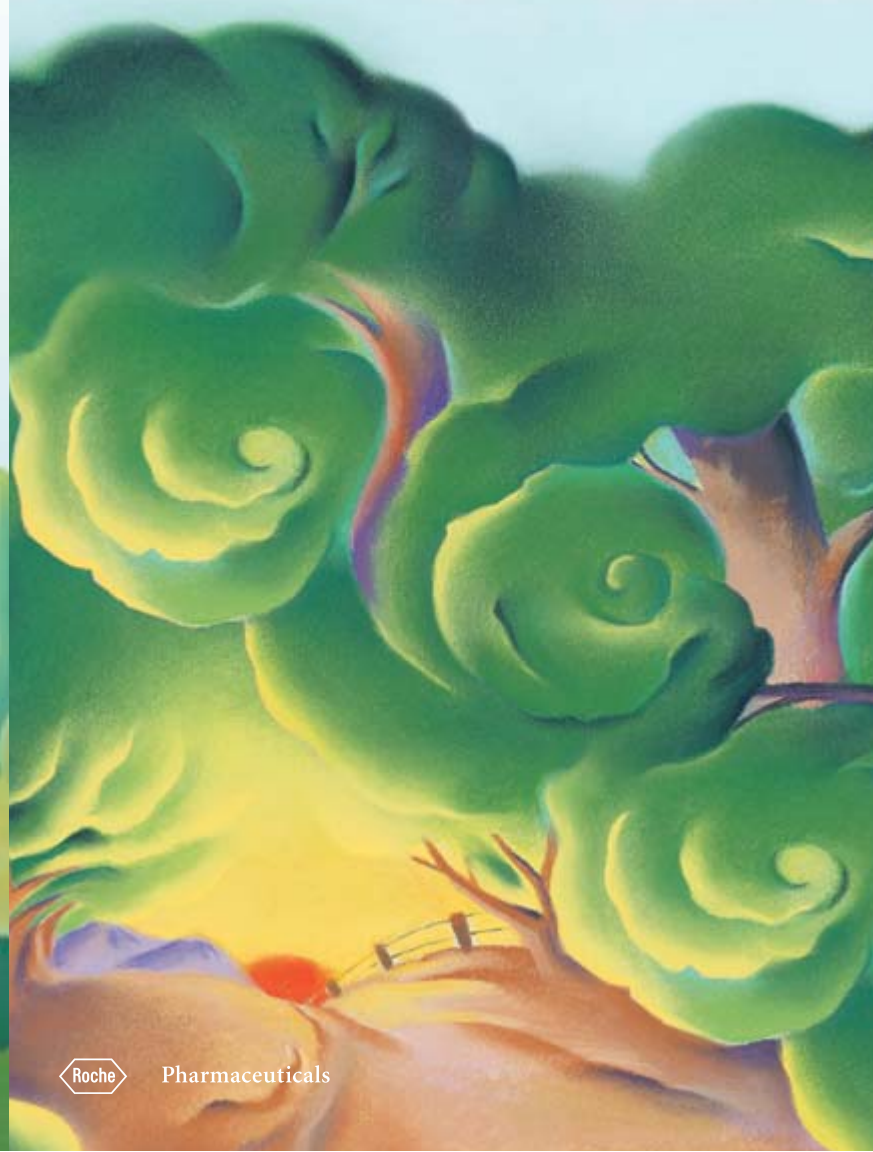
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## Q: What is hepatitis C?

**A:** Hepatitis C is a type of virus that **primarily attacks the liver**. As hepatitis C reproduces, it kills surrounding cells and triggers the body to defend itself. This defense can lead to reactions, such as swelling of the liver.

It's uncertain *exactly* how hepatitis C could affect you long-term. However, **if left untreated, liver damage can sometimes cause more serious liver diseases**, like liver cancer or cirrhosis (where normal liver cells are replaced by scar tissue).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 3.9 million Americans are infected with hepatitis C, most of whom are chronically infected.

## Q: How do I know if I have hepatitis C?

**A:** People infected with hepatitis C **may** experience symptoms such as flu-like symptoms, joint pain, depression and mood swings. Or they may not experience any symptoms at all. What's more, symptoms mentioned above don't always mean that a person is infected with hepatitis C.

**The only way to know for sure that you have hepatitis C is to get a blood test.** So if you think you may be at risk, talk to your doctor about getting tested.

## Q: How are people infected with hepatitis C?

**A:** Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that is passed from person to person when infected blood comes in contact with noninfected blood. It is also possible to contract hepatitis C from infected body fluids, although transmission through body fluids is less likely. Some ways this can happen include

- Blood transfusions (before July 1992), operations and infected blood products
- Intravenous drug use (past or present—even one-time use)
- Tattooing and body piercing
- Occupational, eg, needlestick and dental treatment
- Needles, dialysis equipment and other medical equipment
- Transmission from mother to child during birth
- Sharing personal hygiene items (eg, razors, toothbrushes, nail files)
- Intramucosally (that is, through the tissues lining body openings), when taking cocaine or other drugs
- Sexual activity that involves contact with infected blood or body fluids
- Acupuncture