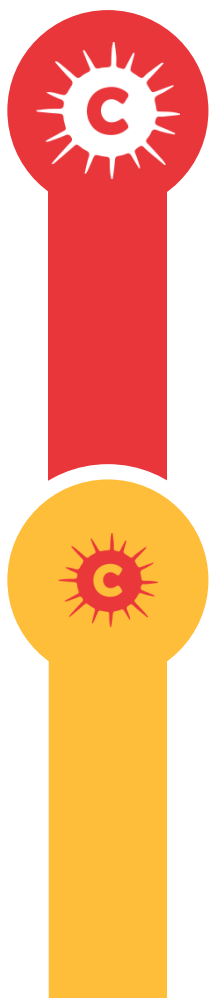
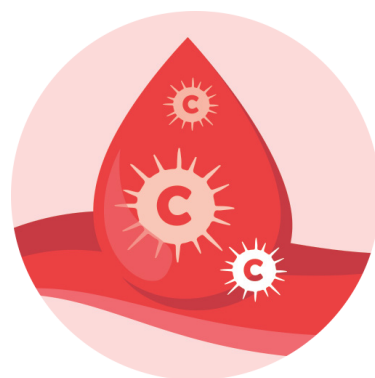


How hepatitis C spreads

The hepatitis C virus is a blood-borne virus, meaning it's transmitted when the blood of an infected person enters another person's bloodstream. It only takes a small amount of blood to transmit hepatitis C. The virus can live outside of the body for at least four days. In other conditions, it can survive for much longer (e.g. for many weeks inside a syringe).

Understanding the risks

There are many myths about exactly how hepatitis C is transmitted. It is important to know that the riskiest activities are those with the highest potential and frequency of blood-to-blood contact. Those activities that have no chance of exchanging blood are considered no risk. Based on these distinctions, high-risk, some-risk and no-risk activities are outlined below.

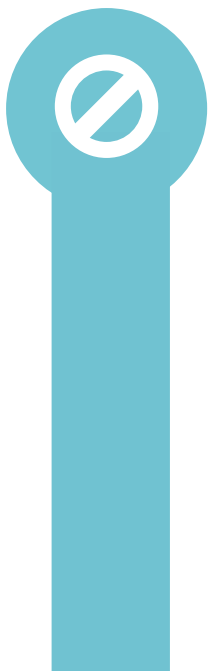


High-risk activities

- Unsterile medical or dental procedures and traditional medical practices where the skin is pierced.
- Re-using someone else's injecting equipment for drugs.
- Unsterile tattooing or body piercing.

Moderate-risk activities

- Needle-stick injuries to health workers.
- Mother-to-child transmission may happen during pregnancy or childbirth if mother has hepatitis C.
- Blood product transfusion in Australia before 1990.
- Re-using someone else's personal items that may have blood on them, such as razors and toothbrushes.
- Blood-to-blood contact during sex.



No-risk activities

If there is no blood-to-blood contact, there is no risk of transmission of hepatitis C. People cannot get or transmit hepatitis C by:

- Sharing toilets, drinking glasses or eating utensils
- Hugging, kissing or touching
- Using swimming pools
- Mosquito or other insect bites
- Coughing or sneezing

Risks for people living with hepatitis C

Understanding how hepatitis C is transmitted is important for people who are already live with hepatitis C so they can reduce the chance of:

