

change your life style and take some control of your situation.

### *Looking After Yourself*

Whether or not you decide to start treatment, looking after yourself should be a priority. Your liver will benefit from you following a healthy, balanced diet and lifestyle. Top tips include:

- Reduce alcohol intake or stop completely
- Drink plenty of water
- Eat more fresh fruit and vegetables
- Cut down on salty, fatty, high sugar foods
- Talk to others affected by the virus
- For more information, contact us.

### *Treatment*

Hepatitis C is a treatable condition. Treatment will last between 24 and 48 weeks depending on the type of virus you have.

You will be advised about treatment options by a specialist nurse or doctor. It is important that you are stable before committing to treatment

Current treatment has a 50% - 80% success rate, depending on the type of virus you have. Other factors which may affect the success rate include:

- Your age
- How long you have had the virus
- Extent of liver damage

### *Here is how we can help you help yourself!*

C plus staff are here to help and support you, answer your questions and listen, help you understand your illness, accompany you when you attend hospital appointments and generally help you cope.

There is also an opportunity for you to meet other people who are Hep C positive, get involved with groups and access complementary therapies.

C Plus is a voluntary sector organisation and part of Mainliners, a national charity.

Registered Charity 801862  
Co limited by guarantee 2404043



## Supporting People Affected by Hepatitis C In Lothian

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*Hepatitis C:  
The Basics*

## *What is Hepatitis C?*

It is a blood borne virus which primarily affects the liver. Blood borne means that the virus is passed where infected blood comes into contact with non infected blood.

## *What is your Liver?*

It is the largest organ in your body (after your skin) and it is just under your diaphragm on your right side. It is a processing and production plant which carries out hundreds of processes, all vital to health and wellbeing. For example your liver does the following:

- Detoxes
- Regulates Hormones
- Affects sexual desire and function
- Cleans the blood of infection and bacteria

## *How Does Hepatitis C Affect Your Liver?*

Hepatitis C is a slow developing virus which over time will have an adverse

affect on your liver – it will affect the efficiency of your liver and may lead to liver failure if not treated.

## *What are the symptoms of having Hepatitis C?*

Symptoms vary greatly. Some people have no clear symptoms others report feeling tired and flu like over long periods. Hepatitis C can cause a great deal of damage to your liver before any symptoms appear

## *How do you catch Hepatitis C?*

Hepatitis C is spread through blood to blood contact. Possible routes of transmission include:

- Sharing equipment when injecting or snorting drugs – the most common route of transmission.
- Tattoos and piercings carried out with unsterilised equipment
- Sharing toiletries- razors, toothbrushes, clippers – as these can cut or nick the skin

- Medical or dental treatment or blood products in countries where infection control is limited
- Blood transfusion in UK before 1991
- Sexual activity – transmission is low unless rough enough to cause bleeding, or during menstruation
- Mother to child is thought to be a low risk

## *Have you ever been at risk?*

If yes, to be certain that you have or don't have the virus you should get tested. You can get tested at the following:

- Local Genito - Urinary Medicine Clinic
- Harm Reduction Service
- Local GP

For more information or a pre test discussion, call us at C Plus on **0131 478 7969**.

## *What can you do if you have Hepatitis C?*

First take a deep breath; Hepatitis C is NOT a death sentence. It is a slow progressing virus, so you have time to