

# RATE MY MEDICAL DOCTOR

medical reference sheets

## hepatitis

### WHAT IS HEPATITIS?

Hepatitis is a condition involving inflammation of the liver. It can be caused by viruses, toxic substances or some types of diseases. The most common types of viral hepatitis are hepatitis A, B, and C.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Common symptoms are nausea, vomiting, weakness and a generalized ill feeling. Some people may have pain in the abdomen, fever, or rash. Some people may have no symptoms at all. Your doctor will order laboratory tests to determine if you have hepatitis and also to determine what is the specific cause.

### HEPATITIS A

#### How Can I Get It?

A person gets Hepatitis A from eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated by material containing the virus (usually feces of a person who had the disease). It can be spread in homes, daycares and public eating places if the personal hygiene of the infected person is poor.

#### What will happen if I have Hepatitis A?

If your test is positive it will be reported to Public Health and they will contact you to see if your family and friends need to be tested. If you are food handler, your co-workers may need to be tested. You will have to stay off work until you are no longer infectious.

#### How can I prevent the spread of Hepatitis A?

A person with hepatitis A is infectious during the first week to ten days after they ill. Practise good hygiene. Always wash your hands with soap and water after going to the toilet and after changing diapers or cleaning up a child's stool. Launder any soiled clothes or bedding in hot water separate from other laundry.

#### What is the treatment and immunization for Hepatitis A?

Bed rest and following your doctors instructions provide the best chance for a quick recovery, There is now an effective vaccine against Hepatitis A, (eg.: Havrix™). Protection from Hepatitis A is

recommended for all travellers outside of Canada. Two injections 4 weeks apart can provide immunity for 1 year. A booster dose provides extended protection.

### HEPATITIS B

#### How Can I Get It?

A person gets Hepatitis B by coming in contact with infected blood, blood products or body fluids. For example: sharing needles and syringes with an infected person; having intercourse with an infected person without using a condom; body piercing, tattooing or acupuncture with improperly cleaned needles.

#### What will happen if I have Hepatitis B?

If you test is positive for Hepatitis B the Public Health Service will contact you to see if your family and sexual contacts need to be tested. Most people recover from Hepatitis B but a few people will become chronic carriers, they will have the virus circulating in their blood.

#### How can I prevent the spread of Hepatitis B?

You should NOT donate blood. You should NEVER share needles or syringes. You should ALWAYS use a condom to prevent giving the virus to your sexual partner. If you are a carrier you should not share items such as razors, toothbrushes, earrings. You will need to tell your doctor, nurse, dentist, etc., that you are carrier so they do not become infected. You will need to talk to Public Health Services to learn how to clean up and blood if you cut yourself.

*Information is continued on the back side of this sheet.*

# hepatitis (continued)

## How can I prevent the spread of Hepatitis B?

There are effective vaccines available against Hepatitis B. Health care workers and those in jobs where they may be exposed should be vaccinated.

## HEPATITIS C

### How Can I Get It?

You can get Hepatitis C by sharing contaminated needles and syringes. Also through body piercing, tattooing and acupuncture with needles that have been contaminated and improperly cleaned. Before April of 1990, before there were screening tests for Hepatitis C, some people were infected by contaminated blood or blood products.

### What will happen if I have Hepatitis C?

If you are found to be positive for Hepatitis C, Public Health Services will contact you. Many people become chronic carriers. Further testing will be done by your doctor as follow-up on the course of the disease.

### How can I prevent the spread of Hepatitis C?

You should NOT donate blood. You should NEVER share needles or syringes. You will need to follow your doctors instructions about not sharing personal items.

## HEPATITIS D, E, F AND G

There are other Hepatitis viruses which cause disease. These are rare and require investigation. Testing is not routinely available and in some cases there is no test or immunization available at the present time.



medical reference sheets

*Rate My Medical Doctor is North America's premier online rating site. We provide everyone with an opportunity to write reviews on their experience under the care of a medical professional. The information provided within this sheet is not to be implied as medical advice nor should it be used for prognosis, diagnosing, or administering treatment, always follow the instructions of your medical professional.*