



# Hepatitis C

## In Children

Information for parents of children  
with Hepatitis C



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# Introduction

## Who is this information booklet for?

This information booklet is for parents and carers of children who have Hepatitis C. Finding out that a child has Hepatitis C is a difficult and worrying experience for parents and carers. It raises many concerns about the medical, social and psychological implications for the child and his/her family.

## The aim of this information booklet.

This booklet is designed to provide up-to-date information about the medical, psychological and social issues which result from a diagnosis of Hepatitis C. It also provides advice and suggestions about handling potentially difficult issues such as telling the child and others about Hepatitis C.

## Why is this booklet important?

It provides clear information about Hepatitis C. Some parents and carers in Ireland have generously discussed their experiences about when their child was diagnosed with Hepatitis C. This invaluable contribution has helped to clarify some of the key dilemmas which parents and carers face when their child has a diagnosis of Hepatitis C. These parents and carers kindly gave their permission to share their experiences.

Some initial reactions to the diagnosis were;

- ☀ 'a lot of it (the information) went over my head – medical – technical – it was beyond me'

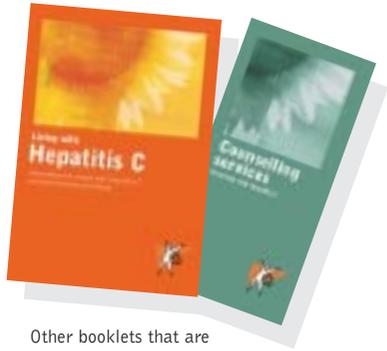
- ☀ 'I didn't know what liver problems were'
- ☀ 'I was devastated – I thought it was HIV – that they were one and the same'
- ☀ 'I thought the child was gone (dead) – I was hysterical – the end of my world'
- ☀ 'it was a complete shock – terrible fear – there was nothing we could do but go the road with it'
- ☀ 'I was swimming in the dark – there was no precedence'

Parents and carers also discussed their current concerns. Some of these are;

- ☀ 'I don't know what the future holds'
- ☀ 'the frequency of drinking alcohol and possible damage to the liver'
- ☀ 'the fear of death is still there'

Parents and carers also shared good news;

- ☀ 'I got great support at group meetings'
- ☀ 'my fears (of death) have been allayed – he is a fine strapping lad – very healthy'
- ☀ 'I am satisfied that I have been given all the information that they have (the medical and nursing team in Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin, Dublin)'.



Other booklets that are available about Hepatitis C

### About The National Children's Liver Unit

When a child is diagnosed with Hepatitis C, he/she will be seen at a specialist out-patient clinic at The National Children's Liver Unit at Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin, Dublin. The specialist clinic team includes a specialist nurse, medical doctor, clinical psychologist and

social worker – who are skilled in the care of children with Hepatitis C. The national children's liver unit group works closely with other professionals in the hospital, in particular with the infectious disease department. This team will provide care and support for children and their families. This information booklet is intended to be used in conjunction with the information that the specialist clinic team will provide.

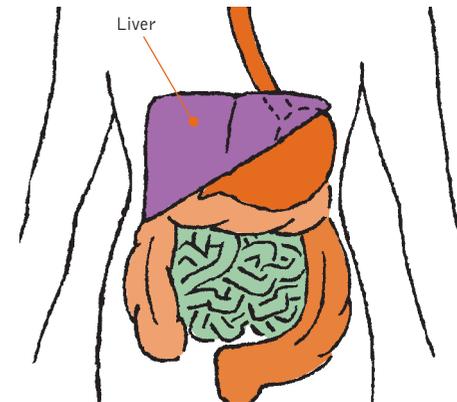
The information in this booklet is what we know today about Hepatitis C. Through ongoing research we are continuously learning more about Hepatitis C. Available updated information and developments will be shared with families at the specialist clinic.



## About Hepatitis C Infection

### What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis is the medical term for inflammation of the liver. Many things can cause the liver to become inflamed and Hepatitis C is one of the most common diseases in the world. The Hepatitis C virus exists in the blood and enters the liver through the bloodstream. The virus irritates the tissues of the liver and causes the liver to become inflamed. Here is some information about what the liver is and how it works:



### THE LIVER

- The liver is found on the right side of the upper part of the abdomen, where it is protected by the lower part of the ribcage.
- The liver processes the nutrients that are absorbed by the gut after a meal so that they become energy for the rest of the body.
- The liver also makes proteins which are used for (1) making new cells and tissues, (2) fighting infection and (3) helping to control the blood clotting system.

## Signs and symptoms of Hepatitis C

### What happens when a child is infected with Hepatitis C?

Possible symptoms experienced by children with Hepatitis C may include tiredness, nausea, poor appetite and weight loss. However, most children with Hepatitis C have no signs or symptoms at all - they continue to be healthy.

#### Signs and Symptoms of Hepatitis C:

- ☼ Tiredness
- ☼ Nausea
- ☼ Poor appetite
- ☼ Weight loss
- ☼ Flu-like illness
- ☼ Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes)

### When a child becomes infected with Hepatitis C there are two possible outcomes.

Firstly, the child may fully recover and clear the virus from his/her system – this is called acute Hepatitis C infection. In this case perhaps the only sign that the child has been infected will be found through blood testing. A blood test will find antibodies to Hepatitis C – these are the body's memory of the infection. About 20% (1 in 5) people who are infected with Hepatitis C will recover quickly. Current medical opinion suggests that the children who have cleared the

virus from their system and who are left with just the antibodies, will not have long-term problems resulting from the Hepatitis C infection.

Secondly, the virus may stay in the child's system and cause a long-term or chronic Hepatitis C infection. A blood test for Hepatitis C will be positive for both the antibodies and the Hepatitis C virus itself.



## Signs and symptoms of Chronic Hepatitis C

### If a child has chronic Hepatitis C infection there are again two possible outcomes.

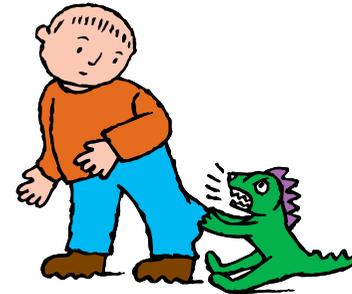
Firstly, and unusually, a small number of children will clear the virus from their system, even if they have had the virus for an extended period.

Clearing the virus.



Secondly, and more commonly, the virus will remain in the child's system and may cause damage to the liver.

Some children do not clear the Hepatitis C virus



### Will my child definitely get liver damage with chronic Hepatitis C?

Current medical opinion suggests that most children with chronic Hepatitis C infection will have either no medical problems or only mild problems. It is very difficult to identify who will have only minor problems and who will develop more serious problems. An increased understanding of Hepatitis C will likely emerge during the next decade, due to the quickly expanding field of research in this area. We expect that knowledge about how the virus acts inside the body and how to treat it will improve.

### What liver damage can occur?

Even after many years of infection, chronic Hepatitis C may cause only minor damage within the liver.

In a minority of people Hepatitis C can eventually cause scarring (cirrhosis) of the liver. However, even patients who have developed cirrhosis may remain stable for many years. Cirrhosis can progress to liver failure or to liver cancer. Although these complications are serious, they occur in only a small number of patients with Hepatitis C over several decades and they can be treated.

## Tests for Hepatitis C

Searching for the Hepatitis C virus is a complicated process and it takes some time. This can be distressing and frustrating for parents but it is vital that the diagnosis of Hepatitis C virus is made with certainty. Diagnosing Hepatitis C requires a series of tests. The testing process is explained briefly below;

Name of test	Purpose of test
ELISA, RIBA	Search for antibodies
PCR	Search for current signs of Hepatitis C
Genotyping	Determines type of Hepatitis C
Liver Function Tests	Indicates liver inflammation
Liver Biopsy	Identifies the condition of the liver

### Searching for past or current signs of Hepatitis C infection

- Antibody tests – ELISA, RIBA – are blood tests that search for the presence of antibodies to Hepatitis C in a person's blood. An **antibody positive** result may mean either that your child used to have or still has the Hepatitis C infection.

### Identifying the current signs of Hepatitis C infection

- PCR test – this is a more specific blood test that identifies if the Hepatitis C virus is **still present** in the body. A positive result means that the child still has Hepatitis C. A further test – the viral load – will identify how much of the virus is present.

### Identifying the type of Hepatitis C infection

- Genotyping – this is a blood test to identify which type of Hepatitis C a child has. There are several different types of Hepatitis C.

### Identifying the condition of the liver

- Liver function tests or liver enzymes – identify how well a liver is working. An abnormal result indicates that the liver is inflamed. Some tests can tell us how well the liver is working.
- Liver biopsy – identifies the condition of the liver and the extent of inflammation. This test may be used if a child is found to be Hepatitis C positive. This test is performed under general anesthetic so that the child is not conscious during the procedure. It involves using a special needle to take a very small piece of liver tissue for examination under a microscope.

## How is Hepatitis C spread

### Hepatitis C CAN be spread through infected blood, including;

- Blood transfusions and blood products – the current risk of getting Hepatitis C from blood products in Ireland is minute.
- Needle sharing among intravenous drug abusers, tattoos, acupuncture, ear-piercing with non-sterilized equipment.
- Healthcare workers may be exposed during the course of their work, for example, through pricking themselves with contaminated needles.
- Mother to baby – this is thought to occur in a small percentage of cases
- Sexual contact – the Hepatitis C virus can be passed through sexual transmission. Most experts consider that the risk posed by sexual activity is small.
- Blood to blood contact with someone who has Hepatitis C – for example, contact with cuts, toothbrushes and razors.
- Unknown – in some cases it is not possible to identify the source of infection.

### Hepatitis C CANNOT be spread by;

- Being in the same room or classroom as a person who has Hepatitis C
- Coughing or sneezing
- Using shared bathroom facilities and toilets
- Food
- Cutlery or crockery
- Swimming pools
- Holding hands
- Kissing or hugging

### Is Hepatitis C transmitted through breastfeeding?

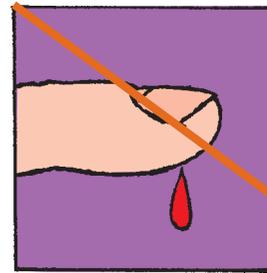
Current information regarding the link between breastfeeding and transmission of Hepatitis C is unclear. Specialists vary in their advice about a mother who is Hepatitis C / PCR positive breastfeeding her baby. There is evidence which suggests that the risk of a baby contracting Hepatitis C from mother's breast milk is extremely low. If this is a concern for you please let your Hepatitis C nurse specialist or medical doctor know so that up to date information about breastfeeding and Hepatitis C can be shared and discussed with you.

## Preventing the spread of Hepatitis C

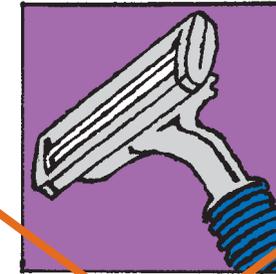
- ✿ **Cuts, blood spills and nosebleeds** – use gloves when attending to cuts and blood. Clean cuts as usual and cover all family members' cuts and grazes to prevent contact with infected blood. Use bleach to clean up any spilled blood. Bloodstains on clothes can be washed out in a hot detergent wash.
- ✿ **Contact sports** – a child with Hepatitis C can play sports but some sports involve injuries that may bleed. It is important to tend to such injuries immediately and cover any cuts or wounds that are bloody.
- ✿ **Personal hygiene** – never share toothbrushes, razors, nail scissors, clippers or tweezers – these items can have tiny traces of blood on them. Each member of the family should have their own personal hygiene items.
- ✿ **Feminine hygiene** – used feminine hygiene products (tampons and pads) should be burned if possible or tied in a plastic bag before disposal in a suitable receptacle.
- ✿ **Medical Donation** – people with Hepatitis C should not donate blood, eggs, sperm or body organs. If a person has Hepatitis C they should not carry a donor card.

The key to preventing the spread of Hepatitis C lies in being careful about your child's and other people's blood. Most of the preventative measures listed below are general careful hygiene practices, such as wearing gloves when in contact with blood, covering wounds and hand washing.

## Stopping the spread of Hepatitis C



Avoid all direct contact with other people's blood.



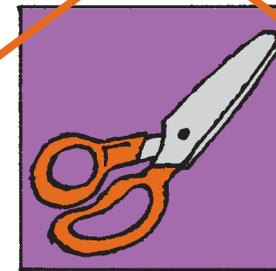
Do not share razors



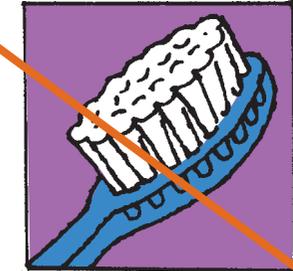
Do not share manicure tools



Do not share needles



Do not share nail scissors

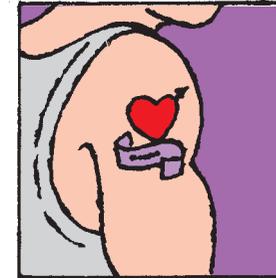


Do not share toothbrushes

## THINK TWICE

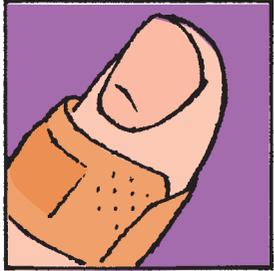


before piercing



before getting a tattoo

## Stopping the spread of Hepatitis C cont'd



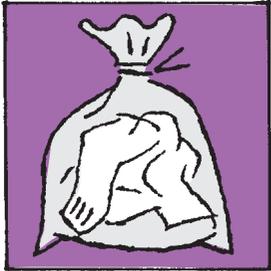
Cover all cuts



Wash your hands



Wash up any spilled blood, including your own, using bleach.



Tie blood-stained tissues or cloths in a plastic bag.



Wear gloves if you have to deal with another person's blood.

## Care of the child with Hepatitis C

When a child has tested positive, or is thought to be positive for Hepatitis C he/she will be referred to The National Children's Liver Unit in Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin, Dublin for further investigation and support. Parents and carers may be advised that some remaining blood tests, not already collected for Hepatitis C, may be performed so that all relevant information is available for families when attending the out-patient clinic.

The first clinic appointment offers an opportunity to meet some of the team who provide care and support for children and families with Hepatitis C. The child's health history will be taken and a physical examination will be performed. When all test results are available it is time to discuss results and plan with the family for the child's care. Contact phone numbers for the team will also be provided for families.

It is a good idea to prepare for the out-patient appointment by thinking about the things which the child and/or family want to know. It is often useful to write down questions and bring a list of queries to the clinic. Questions or worries can be responded to and help or advice given in between appointments by phoning the nurse specialist.

### Children with Hepatitis C can get on with normal life

- ☀ Go to school
- ☀ Play sports and engage in activities
- ☀ Eat a normal healthy diet
- ☀ Will get coughs, colds and childhood illnesses
- ☀ Will be treated by their GP for these routine illnesses
- ☀ Receive all their vaccinations – please consult the hospital team about vaccinations if your child is being treated for Hepatitis C with Interferon
- ☀ May be offered vaccination for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B as these illnesses may, in some cases, be more serious for a child who already has Hepatitis C
- ☀ Will need education and discussion about the serious effects that alcohol has on the liver of a person infected with Hepatitis C

## Treatment of Hepatitis C

The aim of treatment for Hepatitis C is to clear the virus from the body. Most children with Hepatitis C have mild infection, with few or no symptoms. This means they can live a normal life even though they have Hepatitis C. For this reason a position of **watchful waiting** has been adopted in relation to treatment of Hepatitis C in children.

**Watchful waiting** means that the specialist clinic team may not begin any specific treatment but will continue to monitor a child's health and liver function on a regular basis. New and more effective treatments for Hepatitis C will be discussed with parents as they become available.

Drug treatment for Hepatitis C involves the use of **anti-viral** drugs. Medical science has not yet determined the best methods and drugs for treating children and young people. This is because treatment for children has not been studied as extensively as treatment for adults. The drugs that are available today help to clear the virus in only a minority (about 1 in 5) of people and have many side-effects. However, new treatments seem to be more promising. In addition, certain types (genotypes) of Hepatitis C respond better to treatments than others.

### What are the current treatments?

#### Drug treatment;

**Two drugs, Interferon (given by injection) and Ribavirin (taken in capsule form) are currently used to treat chronic Hepatitis C infection in adults in Ireland. Drug treatment is usually reserved for patients whose liver biopsies show scarring or evidence of moderate to severe Hepatitis. When treatment is considered an option for a child, parents will be educated and supported to give the treatment at home.**

#### Surgical treatment;

**Surgical treatment in the form of a liver transplant is only considered if severe complications of liver disease develop. Liver transplantation is a very successful treatment and most people return to normal social and occupational life. There is a risk that Hepatitis C will re-infect the new liver. Research has shown that re-infection does not have a major impact on the liver for at least ten years.**

#### Complementary treatment;

**This may include treatments such as acupuncture; reflexology and other complementary medicines. These approaches may improve symptoms in some people. It is essential to discuss the use of any medicines including complementary treatments with the specialist clinic medical team.**

## Telling a child about Hepatitis C

### Why tell your child about Hepatitis C?

When a child has a medical condition one of the main concerns for parents and carers is talking to the child about it. These are some concerns expressed by parents and carers about telling;

- ☀ 'he does not know yet (about Hepatitis C) – when he finds out it could be an awful shock'
- ☀ 'the neighbours don't know yet and she could lose friends'
- ☀ 'He guessed at age 12 – got angry with me at age 14 and blamed me'
- ☀ 'I'm scared about telling'

Other parents and carers adopted a more philosophical approach;

- ☀ 'I will put it in perspective – in the context of a normal life'
- ☀ 'He is laid back and will accept the issue about drink – he is very popular and has a lovely personality'

These comments highlight some of the main concerns about telling such as

- ☀ how the child will cope with the news;
- ☀ what to say to other people;
- ☀ how children and adolescents will react to their parents or carers;

Concerns highlighted about not telling and dealing with issues which may arise were;

- ☀ the medical implications of

drinking alcohol;

- ☀ issues about sexual relationships and childbirth
- ☀ explaining health related changes in the child's life due to having Hepatitis C

These very real concerns have naturally caused parents and carers to worry about telling.

### Deciding to tell your child:

Parents and carers may decide not to tell when their child is younger or in good health. The issue of telling may become more crucial if children show symptoms of illness or if adolescents begin experimenting with alcohol or become sexually active. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Parents and carers know their own children best and may make the decision about telling based on the knowledge of where their child is at right now. Parents will have the support of a hospital team, support group or professional counselling service which is available to people with Hepatitis C and their families.

When deciding to tell, it is useful to consider that children and adolescents are better supported if a clear and honest explanation is given. Telling helps children and adolescents to;

- ☀ make sense of things they may have seen or overheard about Hepatitis C in relation to themselves
- ☀ feel free to discuss their own worries or fears in an open and honest manner with those who love and support them

## Telling a child about Hepatitis C

- ☀ feel involved in decision making about their condition if they have symptoms
- ☀ feel more in control of what is happening to them
- ☀ develop their own ways of coping
- ☀ seek help from other sources, including trusted friends, family and professional sources

Deciding to tell others is often a difficult decision. It is entirely up to parents, carers and their children who they wish to tell. When telling others it is often helpful to give them an information booklet such as this one. Here are some ideas about telling others;

- ☀ Family – telling offers support and a chance to share difficult decisions
- ☀ Children’s friends – advise your child about who else they can tell
- ☀ School – consider the need for privacy versus need for possible support
- ☀ Friends – choose close trusted friends, decide how much they need to know
- ☀ Professionals – e.g. dentist, G.P., accident & emergency departments – telling may help avoid the use of unsuitable drugs and reduce their risk of infection.

### When to tell your child?

A useful guide in deciding when to tell is to ask what does the child need to know right now? This will vary with the age of

the child, the presence or absence of medical symptoms and your own readiness to tell. A good time to tell is when the key people appear ready and well. Prepare yourself for a range of possible reactions including;

- ☀ confusion – your child may not initially understand the implications of what you say
- ☀ disbelief or denial – your child may not wish to know these facts initially
- ☀ anger – your child may express his/her distress by blaming you
- ☀ worry – about what will happen in the future or worry about telling others
- ☀ sadness – about what they might miss out on in life
- ☀ loneliness – they may feel different from others
- ☀ fear – wondering about what is the worst that could happen
- ☀ relief – your child may know already and be glad to discuss it openly
- ☀ no reaction – your child may decide to take things as they come

These and other reactions and are normal but some of them may be distressing to observe and deal with. Although the initial reaction may be upsetting for the child, parent or carer, it is usually a positive step and will benefit the child and the family.

### How to tell your child:

It is important for parents and carers to be fully informed themselves about Hepatitis C so that they are fully prepared for their children’s questions and possible reactions. This booklet is intended to serve as a useful general information source. Being well informed also involves talking with professionals and support groups and ensuring that your questions and concerns are clearly and accurately addressed.

Choose a time and place which is part of a normal and pleasant day. Children cope better when being given information which is included in their normal routine. Choose a time and place where you will not be interrupted. This allows you the opportunity to reassure and comfort the

child if he/she is worried or upset. Give information that a child can clearly understand. This means taking the child’s age, personality and ability into account. Parents and carers best understand their own child’s needs but support is available when required from other professionals about giving age appropriate information.

It is useful to know how children at different developmental stages understand the cause and effect of illness in general. Here are some tips about how to tell children of different ages.

Age	Understanding of illness cause/effect	Suggestions for giving support
2 - 7	<b>Pre logical thinking</b> Will link illness to objects or people May think cause of illness was magic	Reassurance that any symptoms are not punishment Explain simply using clear examples
7 - 11	<b>Concrete thinking</b> Can locate illness in the body Fear of bodily harm and death Illness caused by person or bad behaviour	Reassurance that any symptoms are not a punishment Explain how symptoms affect the body Reassure that symptoms will not destroy him/her
12 +	<b>More abstract thinking</b> Have realistic view of how illness is caused physically Imagine sinister implications of illness	Need factual information about his/her condition and possible treatment options Need opportunities to discuss fears

## Telling a child about Hepatitis C

### Early childhood (2-7)



Keep information very simple and give a clear cause of Hepatitis C when telling very young children. Reassure them that their symptoms are not a result of doing something wrong or bad behaviour. Link the explanation to concrete examples which may arise such as when a person gets a cold or has a cut which bleeds.

### Middle childhood (7-12)



Keep information specific and real for older primary school aged children. For example, use children's anatomy books and show where Hepatitis C is located in the body. Reassure them that Hepatitis C will not destroy or kill them or their family. Give real examples of how people get Hepatitis C using child friendly terms e.g.

- ☀ germs are baddies and make some people unwell;
- ☀ some baddies get in people's blood;
- ☀ blood tests show if the baddies are there;
- ☀ sometimes medicine (goodies) helps get rid of the baddies;
- ☀ sometimes your body gets rid of the baddies all by itself:

### Older childhood (12+)



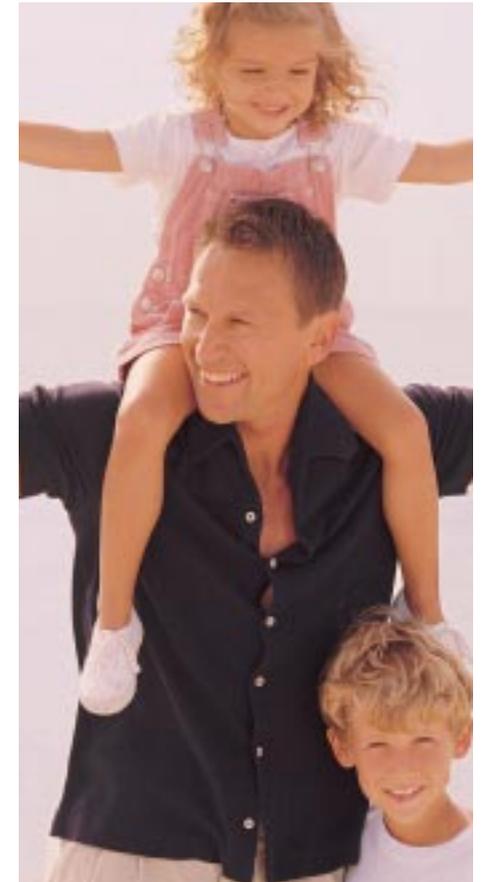
Adolescents may be given more complex and detailed information. For example, they may be given detailed information about the immune system, viruses, the impact of stress and worry on health. They will find discussions supportive and helpful in making joint decisions about possible treatment options. They will benefit from open and honest discussions about key life issues which they are concerned about. Some of these issues may involve;

- ☀ staying healthy;
- ☀ safeguarding the health of others;
- ☀ coping with symptoms;
- ☀ deciding about telling friends and relatives;
- ☀ deciding about telling school authorities and other health professionals;
- ☀ lifestyle issues including smoking, drinking alcohol, safer sex;
- ☀ deciding about the future including having a partner and family;
- ☀ knowing about life and death:

### General Guidelines:

There is no set way to tell. Describe things in the family's language using words that are familiar to the child. Use visual aids such as, books, diagrams, stories, drawings, depending on the age and knowledge of the child. Remember, help and support are available to assist in how to tell children about Hepatitis C. Here are some practical tips about how to tell.

- ☀ Find out what the child knows about health, illness, viruses, etc.
- ☀ Ask direct questions, e.g. 'what do you think that blood test was for'?
- ☀ Use natural opportunities to talk, e.g. watching a soap opera about medicine
- ☀ Allow time for the child to think things through
- ☀ Be available if the child wants to ask questions later



## Telling a child about Hepatitis C

### Who should tell your child:

Children should be told about Hepatitis C by their parents or carers. These are the most important people in a child's life and can offer the child the most appropriate support and reassurance. Some parents may find the idea of telling their child about Hepatitis C too difficult and upsetting. Parents can be there to support their child even when some other informed and trusted person does the telling. Parents may want to prepare for telling their child by talking with another informed and trusted person beforehand.

After telling, parents or carers can support their child by advising them about who else they can tell and who will give them support and information. A parent or child may benefit from talking to another trusted person after sharing or hearing new or difficult information.

### Some final suggestions from other parents of children with Hepatitis C.

- ☀ 'Keep informed about up-to-date medical research – it helps with difficult decisions about whether or not to have treatments'
- ☀ 'Ask plenty of questions – don't be sidetracked – get an answer'
- ☀ 'Advise children about alcohol earlier on'
- ☀ 'Not being able to drink alcohol is not the end of the world'
- ☀ 'Tell them what they are able to deal with'
- ☀ 'Give people the news personally, any news over the phone is a shock'
- ☀ 'Being in a group is good – share some experiences'
- ☀ 'Give your child plenty of encouragement – they can do things that other children can do'

## Living well with Hepatitis C

**General medical advice for all children is to eat a normal, healthy, balanced diet.**

### The Food Pyramid:

#### Sparingly.

Fats and oils, sugars, confectionery, cakes etc

#### 2 Servings per day

Meat, fish, eggs, beans etc

#### 3 Servings per day

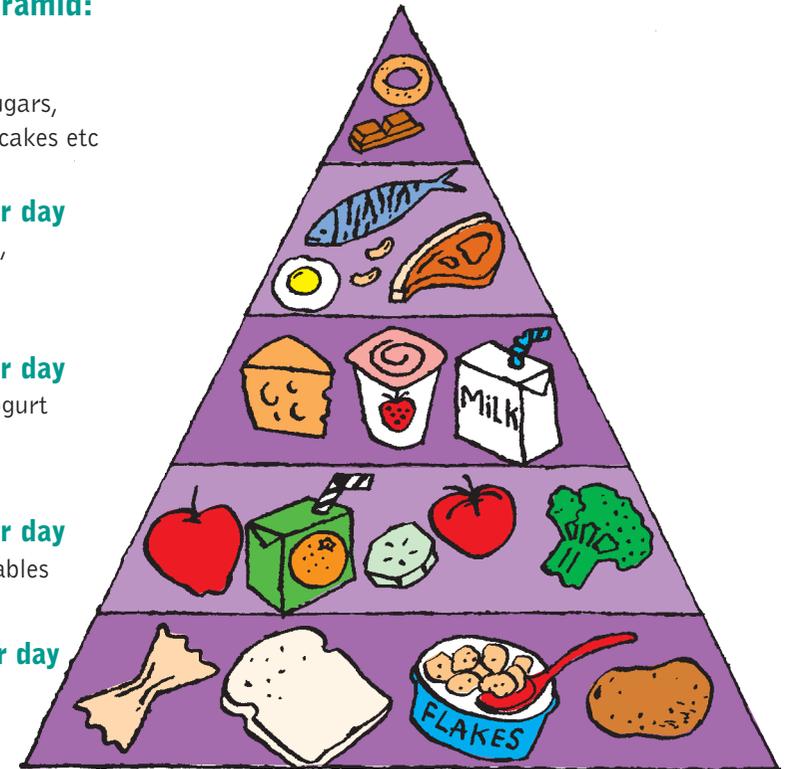
Milk, cheese, yogurt

#### 4 Servings per day

Fruit and vegetables

#### 6 Servings per day

Bread, cereals and potatoes



## Useful addresses

### 1. Support Groups

#### Transfusion Positive

162, Clonmacnoise Road,  
Crumlin,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: (01) 453 8427  
Fax: (01) 453 8929

Transfusion Positive provides information and support to people who have Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion in Ireland, and to their families. Transfusion Positive has a special link person for parents of children with Hepatitis C.

#### Irish Haemophilia Society

Block C,  
Iceland House,  
Arran Court,  
Arran Quay,  
Dublin 7.

Tel: (01) 872 4466  
Fax: (01) 872 4494  
E-mail: [haemophiliasociety@eircom.net](mailto:haemophiliasociety@eircom.net)  
Website: [www.haemophilia-society.ie](http://www.haemophilia-society.ie)

The Irish Haemophilia society provides information and support and services to all people with bleeding disorders who have Hepatitis C, and to their families.

#### Positive Action

56, Fitzwilliam Square,  
Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 676 2853  
Fax: (01) 662 0009  
E-mail: [posact@indigo.ie](mailto:posact@indigo.ie)

Positive Action provides information and support to women who have Hepatitis C from infected Anti-D products administered in Ireland, and to their families.

#### Irish Kidney Association

Donor House,  
Block 43A,  
Park West,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: (01) 668 9788  
Fax: (01) 668 3820  
Lo-call: 1890 45 65 56  
E-mail: [info@ika.ie](mailto:info@ika.ie)  
Website: [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie)

The Irish Kidney Association provides information and support to people with kidney problems, including people who have Hepatitis C through dialysis or organ transplant, and to their families.

#### Hepcats

Tel: 087 791 7742  
E-mail: [hepcats\\_ireland@hotmail.com](mailto:hepcats_ireland@hotmail.com)  
Hepcats is a self-help group set up by and for people living with Hepatitis C.

## Useful addresses

### 2. Specialist Centres

#### The National Children's Liver Unit, Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children,

Crumlin,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: (01) 409 6742 / (01) 409 6100  
Fax: (01) 456 3033  
Website: [www.olhsc.ie](http://www.olhsc.ie)

#### Beaumont Hospital

Hepatology Unit,  
Beaumont Road,  
Dublin 9.

Tel: (01) 809 2220 / (01) 809 3000  
Fax: (01) 809 2219  
Website: [www.beaumont.ie](http://www.beaumont.ie)

#### Mater Misericordiae Hospital

Hepatology Unit,  
Eccles Street,  
Dublin 7.

Tel: (01) 803 2048 / (01) 803 2000  
Fax: (01) 803 4058  
Website: [www.mater.ie](http://www.mater.ie)

#### St. James's Hospital

Hepatology Unit,  
James's Street,  
Dublin 8.

Tel: (01) 410 3417 / (01) 410 3000  
Fax: (01) 410 3418  
Website: [www.stjames.ie](http://www.stjames.ie)

#### St. Vincent's University Hospital

Liver Unit,  
Elm Park,  
Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 209 4248 / (01) 269 4533  
Fax: (01) 283 7724  
Website: [www.st-vincents.ie](http://www.st-vincents.ie)

#### Cork University Hospital

Hepatology Unit,  
Wilton,  
Cork.

Tel: (021) 492 2274 / (021) 454 6400  
Fax: (021) 493 6383

#### University College Hospital

Hepatology Unit,  
Galway.

Tel: (091) 544370 / (091) 524222  
Fax: (091) 520233  
Website: [www.grh.ie/uchg.htm](http://www.grh.ie/uchg.htm)

#### St. Luke's Hospital

Hepatology Unit,  
Kilkenny.

Tel: (056) 85329 / (056) 85000  
Fax: (056) 52232

## Useful addresses

### 3. Liason Officers

The liaison officers provide information and help to people who have Hepatitis C as a result of medical use of infected blood products.

#### Eastern Regional Health Authority

Regional Hepatitis C Liaison Officer,  
Eastern Regional Health Authority,  
Mill Lane,  
Palmerstown,  
Dublin 20.

Tel: (01) 620 1724/ (01) 6201600  
Fax: (01) 620 1627

#### Midland Health Board

Primary Care Unit,  
Midland Health Board,  
Springfield,  
Delvin Road,  
Mullingar,  
Co. Westmeath.

Tel: (044) 84444  
Fax: (044) 84394

#### Mid-Western Health Board

Primary Care Unit,  
Mid-Western Health Board,  
5th Floor,  
Bank House,  
106/108 O'Connell Street,  
Limerick.

Tel: (061) 412200  
Fax: (061) 317407

#### North Eastern Health Board

Primary Care Unit,  
North Eastern Health Board,  
Railway Street,  
Navan,  
Co. Meath.

Tel: (046) 76400/(046) 76451  
Fax: (046) 71052

#### North Western Health Board

Community Care Services,  
North Western Health Board,  
Manorhamilton,  
Co. Leitrim.

Tel: (072) 20424  
Fax: (072) 55627

#### South Eastern Health Board

Primary Care Unit,  
Lacken,  
Dublin Road,  
Kilkenny.

Tel: (056) 84113  
Fax: (056) 84391

#### Southern Health Board

Primary Care Unit,  
Southern Health Board,  
26/27, South Mall,  
Cork.

Tel: (021) 492 1872/(021) 4921871  
Fax: (021) 427 7293

## Useful addresses

### 3. Liason Officers cont'd

#### Western Health Board

Community Services,  
Western Health Board,  
Merlin Park Regional Hospital,  
Galway.

Tel: (091) 775416  
Fax: (091) 752828

#### Northern Area Health Board

Primary Care Unit  
3rd Floor  
Park House  
North Circular Road  
Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 890 8740  
Fax: (01) 890 8707

#### South Western Area Health Board

Primary Care Unit  
Block E  
Westland Park  
Nangor Road  
Dublin 22

Tel: (01) 460 9671  
Fax: (01) 460 9697

#### East Coast Area Health Board

Primary Care Manager  
East Coast Area Health Board,  
Southern Cross House,  
Southern Cross Business Park,  
Boghall Road,  
Bray,  
Co. Wicklow.

Tel: (01) 201 4200  
Fax: (01) 201 4201

## Useful addresses

### 4. Do you need help?

If you have a problem with alcohol contact:

#### **Alcoholics Anonymous**

109, South Circular Road,  
Leonard's Corner,  
Dublin 8.

Tel: (01) 453 8998

Alcoholics Anonymous is a voluntary worldwide group of men and women who meet to get sober and stay sober. Look in your regional telephone directory for the nearest meeting centre.

If you have a problem with drugs contact:

#### **Merchant's Quay Project**

Merchant's Quay,  
Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 679 0044

Fax: (01) 671 3738

#### **Drug Treatment Centre Board**

Drug Addiction Treatment Centre,  
Trinity Court,  
30, Pearse Street,  
Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 677 1122

#### **Parentline**

Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups,  
North Brunswick Street,  
Dublin 7.

Tel/Fax: (01) 878 7230

Helpline: (01) 873 3500

E-mail: [parentline@eircom.net](mailto:parentline@eircom.net)

Parentline offers a support service to parents who are experiencing difficulties in parenting.

If you are despairing or suicidal contact:

#### **The Samaritans**

##### **Republic of Ireland**

Helpline: 1850 60 90 90

(cost of local call)

##### **Northern Ireland**

Helpline: 08457 90 90 90

(cost of local call)

##### **Hearing impaired services** (textphone):

Republic of Ireland: 1850 60 90 91

Northern Ireland: 08457 90 91

## Useful addresses

### 5. Other addresses

#### **Equality Authority**

2 Clonmel Street,  
Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 417 3333

LoCall: 1890 24 55 45

[www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

#### **Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS)**

National Blood Centre  
James's Street,  
Dublin 8

Tel: (01) 432 2800

Fax: (01) 432 2930

Website: [www.ibts.ie](http://www.ibts.ie)

#### **The Professional Register of Traditional Chinese Medicine**

Tel: (066) 976 1066

Website: [www.enablis.co.uk/irishmed](http://www.enablis.co.uk/irishmed)

### Further information on Hepatitis C

#### **British Liver Trust**

Ransomes Europark  
Ipswich IP39 QG  
England

Tel: 0044 1473 276 326

Fax: 0044 1473 276 327

The British Liver Trust produces a range of booklets and other information about all aspects of liver disease.

#### **Recommended reading**

English, R. & Foster, G. (1997),  
Living with Hepatitis C. Robinson  
Publishing Ltd., 7 Kensington Church  
Court, London W8 4SP, England.

(ISBN 1 85487 913 8)

The following two publications were produced by the Consultative Council on Hepatitis C with the support of the Department of Health and Children.

- Living with Hepatitis C, Information for people with Hepatitis C and their families and friends

- Counselling Services for persons with Hepatitis C

## Useful addresses

### 5. Other addresses cont'd

#### The Internet

You may wish to search the Internet for information about Hepatitis C. Some reliable and responsible groups have useful information that you may find of benefit. These sites can be useful to learn more about a topic or to reassure yourself.

Some sites are there to encourage you to use or buy products. Never use or buy a product recommended on the Internet, without first consulting your doctor.

Some sites are technical and have medical jargon. Other sites are written by people with Hepatitis C. Remember that one person's experience may be very different to your own. Internet information is often unverified.

#### Recommended websites

Consultative Council on Hepatitis C  
at [www.cchepc.ie](http://www.cchepc.ie)

Department of Health and Children  
at [www.doh.ie](http://www.doh.ie)

## Notes





Produced by the Consultative Council on Hepatitis C and the staff of The National Children's Liver Unit, Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin, Dublin 12, supported by the Department of Health and Children.

2002