

HEPATITIS C IN FIRST NATIONS LIVING ON-RESERVE IN CANADA

HEPATITIS C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). The virus spreads through contact with blood. Over time and without treatment, HCV can damage the liver and cause liver cancer. HCV is curable.

How common is HCV?

In 2016, the rate of newly diagnosed HCV was **three times higher** in First Nations living on reserve than the overall Canadian population (*The Public Health Agency of Canada and Indigenous Services Canada data, 2016*).

Medications and treatments are available at any stage of illness, and are available through Non-Insured Health Benefits for eligible First Nations, regardless of where they live.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?



Borrowing or lending needles or other drug use equipment



Getting a tattoo or piercing with unsterile equipment



Borrowing or lending personal care items, such as toothbrushes, razors, scissors, and nail clippers



Having another sexually transmitted or blood-borne infection



Being born to a mother with HCV



Contact with blood during sexual activity

REDUCE THE RISK

Prevention:

Know how to protect yourself and others.

Testing:

Talk to your health service provider about confidential testing for HCV and other sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections.

Treatment:

Seek treatment, culturally safe care and support services. Early treatment and care help people live longer and healthier lives.

People can be infected with HCV without knowing it. They may not look or feel sick, but they can still pass on the virus to others.

FIRST NATIONS INITIATIVES

Know Your Status: www.knowyourstatus.ca

Preventing Infectious Disease - Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority:

www.slnha.com/health-services/approaches-community-wellbeing/healthy-living/preventing-infectious-diseases

Promising Practices Documentary - Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kw18QTqs2xo&feature=youtu.be

Sexual Health Wellbeing Learning Model - First Nations Health Authority:

www.fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-IWP-Sexual-Wellbeing-Learning-Model-Fact-Sheet.pdf

Hepatitis C:

www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/hepatitis-c.html

Hope for Wellness Help Line:

Telephone: 1-855-242-3310, or online chat: www.hopeforwellness.ca/



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