

Let's talk about hepatitis C.

Talking about it is part of looking after our health.

Some common ways people can get hepatitis C include:

Tattoo or piercing done outside a professional studio

Time in prison

Injection drug use

Partner/s who are at risk of hep C



Getting tested has never been easier.

How?

Testing is simple.
Some services test with just a finger-prick for free.



How long does it take?

Testing is quick, usually takes 5-10 mins. Most services provide results within an hour.



What if it's positive?

Hep C is curable.
A couple of tablets a day for 2-3 months. Treatment is free.



Find hep C testing, treatment and support:



Scan here

RAISING HEPATITIS C VIRUS (HCV) WITH CLIENTS

Why HCV conversations matter



Alcohol and other drug workers have an important role in supporting people to understand HCV risk, and access testing and treatment. Supportive conversations can make the difference in reducing barriers to testing and people completing treatment where needed.



Key indicators for additional support

- limited or no access to health services
- living with HCV while accessing alcohol and other drug services
- partial diagnosis or being lost to follow-up
- hesitancy, uncertainty, or limited awareness of treatment
- mental health concerns or other intersecting issues (do not assume HCV is being addressed by other services)



Tips for engagement

- choose the **timing** carefully for a meaningful conversation
- be **mindful** of what is happening around you
- engagement can **take time** -keep asking!
- **validate** concerns and **acknowledge** uncertainty or hesitation
- use **universal statements** to help counter misinformation
- be **transparent** about why HCV is being raised
- at a minimum, offer **clear and accessible information**
- take time to explain things using **plain language**
- be prepared for questions about **privacy**, including:
 - *Medical notifications*
 - *My Health Record*

TESTING

HCV testing is available through a couple of ways:

- a. two-stage blood test through a GP or a health clinic
- b. point-of-care (finger-prick) testing at specialist services, including *Peer Based Harm Reduction WA* and *HepatitisWA (The Deen Clinic)*

TREATMENT

HCV is treated with direct-acting antivirals (DAA). Treatment involves:

- taking tablets daily for 8–12 weeks
 - fewer side effects than older treatments
- Side effects (not experienced by everyone) may include tiredness, headache, trouble sleeping, nausea, diarrhea.

Women and HCV^{1,2}

Women experience compounded stigma related to gender roles, drug use, and motherhood, which affect their access to HCV testing and treatment. Women are less likely to take up HCV treatment than men.

Many women receive HCV diagnosis as part of prenatal care, and pregnancy can lead to pauses in HCV care. Prenatal and postnatal care times are important opportunities for follow-up.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People and HCV³

Colonisation and trauma continue to impact Aboriginal health outcomes, including higher rates of HCV.

In practice, stigma, racism, compounded discrimination, experiences of pre-2016 HCV treatment (which had worse side effects), service access, and competing health priorities can affect engagement with HCV care.

References:

- ¹Valerio, K., et al. (2024)
- ²Marshall, A. D., et al. (2024)
- ³Davis, K., et al. (2024)



peer based
harm reduction wa

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Western Australian Network of
Alcohol & other Drug Agencies