

HEPATITIS C

"Nature itself is the best physician" - Hippocrates

Hepatitis - Basics

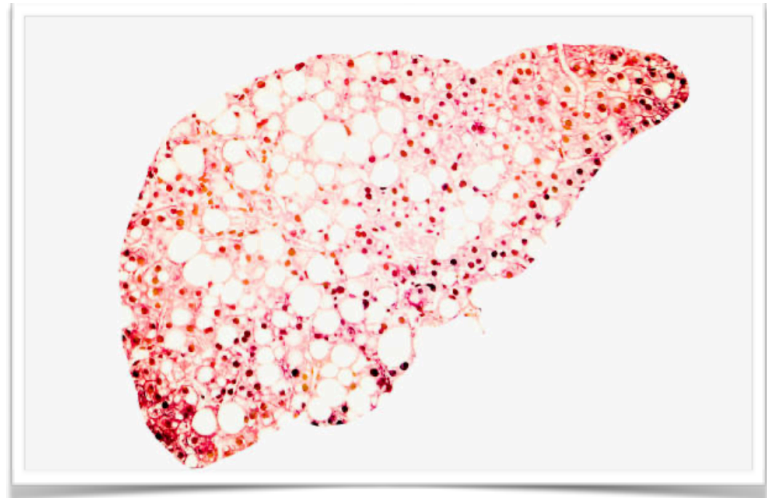
- Infection caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- Virus attacks the liver, leads to inflammation

Transmission

- IVDU (35%), needle stick injuries (3%)
- Sexually (20%)
- Maternal-Fetal (4-5%)
- Sharing toiletries (razor, toothbrush, nail clippers), tattooing
- Dialysis, blood transfusion, organ transplantation (prior to 1992)

Symptoms

- No symptoms (majority)
- Non specific symptoms: Muscle or joint pain, fatigue, malaise, loss of appetite, nausea, dark urine, jaundice, itching of the skin, abdominal pain



Hepatitis C facts

- Acquisition of hepatitis C virus (HCV) at a younger age have a better prognosis. Self-limited in 15-50% patients. Chronic infection develops in 70-80 % patients. Cirrhosis develops within 20 years of disease onset in 20% of persons with chronic infection.
- A person can spread hepatitis C virus without having symptoms.
- A person with HCV infection should:
 - Abstain from alcohol use as it accelerates the onset of cirrhosis and end-stage liver disease.
 - Use barrier protection during sexual intercourse.
 - Avoid sharing personal toiletries.