

When Should I Tell Them?

Some people may want to share information as soon as they are diagnosed. Others may wait until they feel more comfortable about it. This decision is up to you.

It may be wise to tell people who are directly affected such as family, sex partner(s) and/or needle-sharing partner(s) right away. They, too, may want to get tested. If that is the case, you can give them emotional support.

When you decide to tell them, pick a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Allow enough time to talk, and give them time to ask questions.



For More Information

Call your health care provider, your local health department or visit:
www.health.mo.gov

More information available at:
www.cdc.gov/hepatitis



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Hepatitis C



Should I Tell People I Have It?

Missouri Department of Health
and Senior Services

Hepatitis C



Telling someone you have hepatitis C is a personal decision.

Who Should I Tell?

You may want to start first with people you trust the most.

People you may want to tell:

- Sexual partner(s)
- Doctor, nurse and dentist
- Family members
- Roommate(s)
- Friends
- Needle-sharing partner(s)
- Employer

What Should I Tell Them?

It might be best if you begin by telling people when and how you found out that you have hepatitis C.

Give them information about how the virus is spread and how the virus is not spread.

Tell them a simple blood test is all that is required to find out if you have the virus.

Tell them there is medicine available to treat the virus.

Tell them it is spread by blood-to-blood contact. That means it can be spread by sharing any item that can carry infected blood (needles, razors, any drug-sharing equipment, nail clippers, toothbrushes).

Tell them it is not spread by casual contact (kissing, hugging, shaking hands).

Should I Tell People I Have HCV?

Telling people about your hepatitis C diagnosis is a very important and a very personal decision. It can make a difference in how you feel about yourself, and how you cope with the diagnosis. It can affect relationships. This is strictly your decision.

If you choose to tell someone else, it's okay if you ask him or her to keep this information private but there is always the possibility that they could share it with someone else.

Why Should I Tell?

If you decide to share this information with other people in your life they can:

- Offer support
- Help run errands for you or help with childcare when you are feeling sick
- Help with housework or yard work
- Help you prevent its spread

The most important points you should discuss are:

Risk Factors

- If you shared needles to inject drugs, tell your past and present needle-sharing partner(s) that they may want to get tested.
- Tell your sex partner(s) that it is difficult to catch this virus through sex, but you need to discuss and encourage a condom each time.
- Encourage your sex partner(s) to get tested.

Positive changes you are making such as:

- Avoiding alcohol
- Avoiding high risk behaviors (injecting drugs and unsafe/unprotected sex)
- Following doctor's orders
- Taking medicine on time
- Keeping all your doctor appointments
- Getting enough rest and exercise
- Eating a good balanced diet

Hepatitis C Medicine

- Talk about how you are taking your medicine, how often and how long you have been on it.
- Explain the side effects.
- You might want to tell them that some days you feel extra tired because of the medicine.