



May 2017

### May: National Hepatitis Awareness Month

#### What is hepatitis?

“Hepatitis” means inflammation of the liver. Toxins, certain drugs, some diseases, heavy alcohol use, and bacterial and viral infections can all cause hepatitis.

Hepatitis is also the name of a family of viral infections that affect the liver; the most common types are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

We are going to focus on **Hepatitis C**, which is now the most frequent form of Hepatitis in the United States.

#### Hepatitis C

A contagious liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). It can range in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks (acute) to a serious, lifelong illness that attacks the liver (chronic).



**Acute:** A short-term illness that occurs within the first 6 months after exposure.

- About 15%–25% of people who get Hepatitis C will clear the virus from their bodies without treatment and will not develop chronic infection.

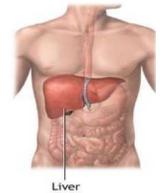
**Chronic:** A long-term illness that occurs when the HCV remains in a person’s body. Infection can last a lifetime and lead to serious liver problems.

- About 75%–85% of people who become infected with HCV develop chronic infection.
- Most people with chronic Hepatitis C do not have any symptoms until after many years of infection has caused liver damage.
- Often detected during routine blood tests to measure liver function and liver enzyme levels.
- Can result in long-term health problems, including liver damage, liver failure, liver cancer, or even death.
- The leading cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation in the United States.
- Approximately 19,000 people die every year from Hepatitis C related liver disease.

#### Symptoms

Approximately 70%–80% of people do not have any symptoms. Some people can have mild to severe symptoms soon after being infected, including:

- fever and fatigue
- loss of appetite
- nausea, vomiting
- abdominal pain
- joint pain
- dark urine
- clay-colored bowel movements
- jaundice (yellow color in the skin or eyes)



#### Who should get tested for Hepatitis C?

Talk to your doctor about being tested for Hepatitis C if any of the following are true:

- ⇒ You were born from 1945 through 1965.
- ⇒ You are a current or former injection drug user, even if only one time or many years ago.
- ⇒ You were treated for a blood clotting problem before 1987.
- ⇒ You received a blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992.
- ⇒ You are on long-term hemodialysis treatment.
- ⇒ You have abnormal liver tests or liver disease.
- ⇒ You work in health care or public safety and were exposed to blood through a needlestick or other sharp object injury.
- ⇒ You are infected with HIV.

#### Treatment

There are several medications available to treat Hepatitis C. Many people go into complete remission.

<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/>

#### Tech Corner Liver Health-Hepatitis C

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

- ◆ Provides information about Hepatitis C, the leading cause for liver disease
- ◆ Guides you through the Hep C risk assessment, testing, and care steps
- ◆ Includes many resources to stay informed about your liver health
- ◆ App available in Android and iOS



## Mediterranean diet: A heart-healthy eating plan.

The heart-healthy Mediterranean diet is a healthy eating plan based on typical foods and recipes of Mediterranean-style cooking.

### Benefits of the Mediterranean diet

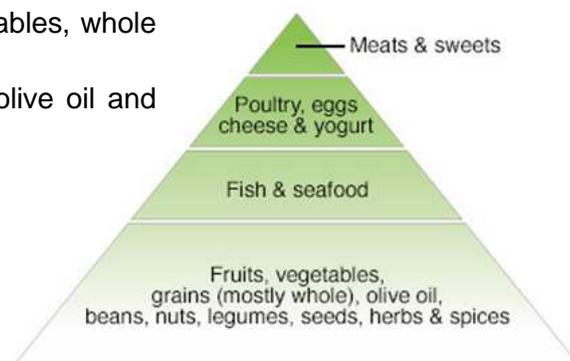
Research has shown that the traditional Mediterranean diet:

- Reduces the risk of heart disease.
- Is associated with a lower level of oxidized low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol - the "bad" cholesterol that's more likely to build up deposits in your arteries.
- Is associated with a reduced risk of dying from cardiovascular disease as well as overall mortality
- Reduces the incidence of cancer, and Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.
- Women who eat a Mediterranean diet supplemented with extra-virgin olive oil and mixed nuts may have a reduced risk of breast cancer.

### Key components of the Mediterranean diet

The Mediterranean diet emphasizes:

- Eating primarily plant-based foods, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts.
- Replacing butter and margarine with healthy fats such as olive oil and canola oil.
- Using herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods.
- Limiting red meat to no more than a few times a month.
- Eating fish and poultry at least twice a week.
- Enjoying meals with family and friends.
- Drinking red wine in moderation (optional).
- Getting plenty of exercise.



[www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition.../mediterranean-diet/art-20047801](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition.../mediterranean-diet/art-20047801)

## An easy way to significantly lower your risk of 13 types of cancer.

Several large studies showed a lower risk of 13 types of cancers in people who are physically active.

Compared to people who reported doing the least moderate-to-vigorous activity during their leisure time, those who did the most had about a:

- ◆ 20 to 26 percent lower risk of liver, kidney, stomach, lung (in smokers and ex-smokers), or uterine cancer and myeloid leukemia.
- ◆ 10 to 15 percent lower risk of myeloma, colon, head and neck, rectal, bladder, or breast cancer.
- ◆ 42 percent lower risk of esophageal cancer (adenocarcinoma).

### The impact on other cancers.

For 13 other cancers, like thyroid, pancreatic, brain, and ovarian, physical activity was not linked to a lower risk.

On the other hand, being more active was associated with:

- ◆ 27 percent higher risk of malignant melanoma (likely because of sun exposure).
- ◆ 5 percent higher risk of local (but not advanced) prostate cancer. Men who are more active are also more likely to get screened for prostate cancer, which could account for their slightly greater risk of being diagnosed with this cancer.

**Moderate-to-vigorous activity** can be brisk walking, jogging, running, swimming, biking, dancing, or similar exertions.

