



Hepatitis C

Your child may have been exposed to this disease on _____.
Date(s)

Please check your child for symptoms through _____.
Date

If your child has symptoms, please contact your child's healthcare provider.

If my child has this disease, when can he or she return to school or child care?

Children sick with hepatitis C may not return to school until approved by their healthcare provider. A person who is a "carrier," meaning a person who does not have symptoms but still has the virus present in the body, may attend school or child care.

Hepatitis C is an infection of the liver caused by a virus. Symptoms are:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Dark urine
- Nausea and vomiting
- Clay-colored stools
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- Joint pain
- Abdominal discomfort

If a person gets sick, it usually takes 2 weeks to 6 months to happen. However, not everyone experiences symptoms.

When a person is first infected by this virus, it usually causes a short-term illness. Approximately 75-85% of people who become infected with Hepatitis C virus develop chronic (long-term) infection. Chronic hepatitis C can lead to liver scarring (cirrhosis) or liver cancer.

What can I do now?

Watch your child for symptoms of this disease. Call your child's doctor or health care provider if your child is sick. Talk to your doctor before giving your child any prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal medications, which may damage the liver.

How is hepatitis C spread?

This virus is spread when blood from an infected person enters the body of someone who is not infected. This can happen by:

- Sharing personal care items that may have come in contact with another person's blood, such as razors and toothbrushes
- Sharing needles or syringes
- Getting tattoos or piercings from facilities with improper sanitation practices.
- Being born to a mother who has Hepatitis C
- Having unprotected sexual contact with someone infected with hepatitis C

A sick person can spread the virus up to 1 week before symptoms start. A person with chronic hepatitis C infection can spread the virus in their blood at any time even if they do not have symptoms.