

Mayo Clinic Minute: What is hepatitis C?

VIDEO	AUDIO
	Hepatitis C is a viral infection that causes liver inflammation.
Karthik Gnanapandithan, M.D. Hospital Internal Medicine Mayo Clinic	"If untreated, it causes permanent damage, fibrosis, and liver failure. The liver loses its function, and, ultimately, toxins accumulate in the body and the other organs also get affected."
	"And if not treated properly, in time, it can cause liver damage requiring liver transplant or any further complications."
	Hepatitis C is spread by contact with blood that has the virus in it. The two most common ways it's transmitted are the sharing of contaminated needles by IV drug users and sexual transmission.
	"This is an infection that is completely curable. And if not treated, it leads to life-threatening consequences."
	"And it's usually a combination of two medications. It's given over an eight-to-12-week period, and they're extremely effective. And the cure rate is more than 95%."
	The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that every person over age 18 should be screened for hepatitis C at least once in their lifetime. Anyone who is pregnant should be tested during each pregnancy. And those in high-risk groups should have regular periodic testing.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.