

Hepchat

A newsletter bringing up to date information for HCV patients by HCV patients.

Hepatitis C web sites:

www.hep-centre.com

www.hivandhepc.com

www.hepatitisfoundationinternational.co

www.hepcuk.info

www.britishlivertrust.co

Phone: 07989 532317

Email: info@healhep.com

or

Write to: H.E.A.L
'The Surgery'
32 Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
EH3 9EZ

Alcohol May Affect HCV

Immunology Researchers have demonstrated that alcohol promotes the proliferation of hepatitis c virus in human liver cells. They also found that alcohol increases the activity of a protein called nuclear factor kappa B and therefore causes the Hepatitis C virus to replicate or produce multiple copies of itself. They also found that alcohol interferes with the anti-viral activity of interferon alpha, a key therapy used for patients with Hepatitis C..

We're
On The Web
<http://www.healhep.com>

H.E.A.L logo designed by:
dollydoes@hotmail.com

HEPCHAT LINE

When You Need To Talk Our Hepchat Line Is Here For You-

Call hepchat—07989 532317

Our hepchat hep line at H.E.A.L based in Edinburgh operates 7 days . Our phones are manned by Hepatitis C+ challenged individuals, fighting against Hepatitis C.

They combine personal experience with on-going research and training to provide confidential, practical help and up to date information about living with the virus.

Frequently, this includes educating callers about hepatitis A and B, and addressing co-infection (HCV/HIV) issues as well. Here is what you can expect when you call the Hepchat line.

- Respect, patience, understanding and support and a listening ear .
- Informed jargon free answers to tough questions.
- Advice about managing treatment side effects.
- General referrals.
- Support Group referrals.



Hepchat



Hepatitis C information for patients by patients

Prevention of HCV Transmission in Personal Care

How Is Hepatitis C Spread?

Hepatitis C is a blood borne infection, which means it is spread through contact with the blood of an infected person. The most common route of infection is through sharing needles used to inject drugs.

Healthcare workers may contract HCV from a needle stick injury from a contaminated needle or other accidental exposure on the job. In at least 1-10 cases people have no identifiable risk factors for infection, in other words it is not known how they got Hepatitis C.



Since HCV is a blood borne virus it can at least in theory be transmitted by contaminated personal items such as razors, or nail care equipment. Any equipment used by manicurists, tattooists, barbers and body piercers that may come into contact with HCV infected blood might transmit the virus.

This can happen when a tiny amount of infected blood (even a tiny amount to small to see) stays on the equipment after being used and then comes into contact with the bloodstream or mucous membranes of another person on whom the same equipment is later used.

Personal equipment that is shared among people and can come into contact with blood and spread HCV includes Tattooing and body piercing needles and other equipment, cuticle scissors, nail files, emery boards, razors, hair clippers, hair removing tools such as tweezers and electrolysis equipment and even hair cutting scissors and combs.



The transmission of HCV through personal care procedures has not been very well studied, but one patient with HCV said her only risk factor for contracting HCV was that she used to visit a nail bar regular.

Support Groups and Help Lines

H.E.A.L 07989 532317
Edinburgh
Newsletter, info, advice, self-help, support, and chat line.

Capital C 0131 478 7929
Edinburgh
Info, advice, Support group meets monthly.

C-Level 0141 332 2520
Glasgow
Testing centre, support group, info ,advice.

Positive Friends 0141 954 2451
Glasgow
Support group, info, advice.

British liver trust 0808 800 1000
Info, advice.

Mainliners 020 7582 3338
London
Support group, info, advice.

The Haemophilia society 020 7380 0600
Support group, advocacy, info, advice.

Hep C Trust 020 7089 6220
London
Helpline 0870 200 1 200
Weekdays 12— 6 p.m (thurs -7p.m)

The information in this newsletter is not intended to be used as medical instruction.
Your G.P. should be consulted before taking any action based on any of this information.

Keeping Safe - Disposable Items

Some tools used by tattooists, piercers, manicurists and barbers should be used only once, on a single person. Most now use disposable needles for each customer; disposable inkpots in tattooists should also be used.

Paper emery boards, files, cotton balls, swabs, sponges and all other items that cannot be cleaned should be used on only one person and then disposed of carefully.



Risky Items

Blades or scrapers that are used for hard skin of the feet are especially likely to come into contact with blood. Cutting cuticles can have a risk of contact with blood and many recommend that nail bar workers should not cut cuticles.



Straight razors are also likely to draw blood; therefore disposable or safety razors should be used and discarded after each use.

Disinfecting and Cleaning

Any equipment that is used for more than one person should be properly cleaned and disinfected between users. Any procedure involving piercing the skin then disposable tools should be used unless they can be completely sterilised. All types of tools should be soaked in bleach for at least ten minutes some experts recommend 20 minutes, although the actual needles are disposable, tattoo guns, razor handles and electrolysis machines should be cleaned thoroughly with bleach and a disinfecting solution between uses.



STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

For practical purposes in daily living, standard precautions means assuming that every person's blood and body fluids are infectious for HCV, HIV, HBV and other blood borne viruses

The safest way to go about living these days is to assume everyone is infected with something. People of all colours, rich and poor, fat and thin, old and young are chronically infected with HCV, HBV, HIV, and other diseases. Forty to 90 percent of these people don't know they're infected.

Continued Overleaf

(Standard Precautions Continued)

If you know your daughter has HCV, you probably spend some of your time thinking of how to keep her from infecting others. It's good that you're aware, but don't forget all those people out there who don't know or aren't ling about their disease who could accidentally infect your daughter with HBV, HIV, or some other disease.

It is *impossible* to identify those living with an infectious disease. The only way to try and keep yourself and your kids reasonably safe is to learn a practical approach to standard precautions. At first, you'll be paranoid of everyone and ~~ev~~rything, but as the precautions become habits, they'll be a natural part of your life - like turning the lock on a door, or stepping on the brake at a red light. They will become normal, daily precautions.

The thing to remember with standard precautions is to always have a barrier between your skin and mucous membrane (around the eyeballs, gums, and inside the nose), and the (potentially) infectious substance. Go to a chemist and buy some latex gloves. Keep them in your house and car. If you don't happen to have gloves and you need to deal with someone's body fluid, put sandwich bags or bin liners over your hands. Use a sanitary towel or thick, rolled-up towel to collect the fluid or staunch the flow of blood.

If you wear glasses, keep them on. If you don't wear glasses, put on your ~~su~~glasses to protect your eyes. If you have one, tie a scarf around your face like the masked bandits used to do.

Use a one-part bleach to ten-part water solution, or another disinfectant for cleaning up substances. Including your own! As soon as you have dealt with the situation, throw away the disposable protective items (your gloves, etc.) and wash your hands thoroughly.

As soon as possible, cover your hands again and remove any non-disposable items you're wearing and wash them appropriately. Common sense will guide you in this. Just don't go through all of the precautions then put your hand on your dress, which is covered in someone else's body fluid.

Make sure you keep all your cuts and abrasions covered with a waterproof plaster or bandage. Be careful with badly chapped skin. It can crack and allow fluids to enter and exit. These precautions are a two-way street. You may be one of the millions unaware that you're living with an infectious disease.

Only you know if your child is old enough to understand these precautions. Practicing them with your kids would be useful for the whole family.



A MILLENNIUM AWARD SCHEME
SUPPORTED BY FUNDS
FROM THE NATIONAL LOTTERY