

Access to Hepatitis C Treatment in Prison or Jail

Access to hepatitis C treatment in prison or jail may be limited based on several factors. Medical providers will consider your liver health, sentence length, and medical history. If you've been told you are not currently eligible for treatment or need to wait, here are some steps you can take:

During Incarceration

- Ask your medical provider why treatment is being delayed or denied
- Follow facility procedures to request more information
- See your medical provider regularly to monitor your liver and overall health
- Request copies of your medical records before release

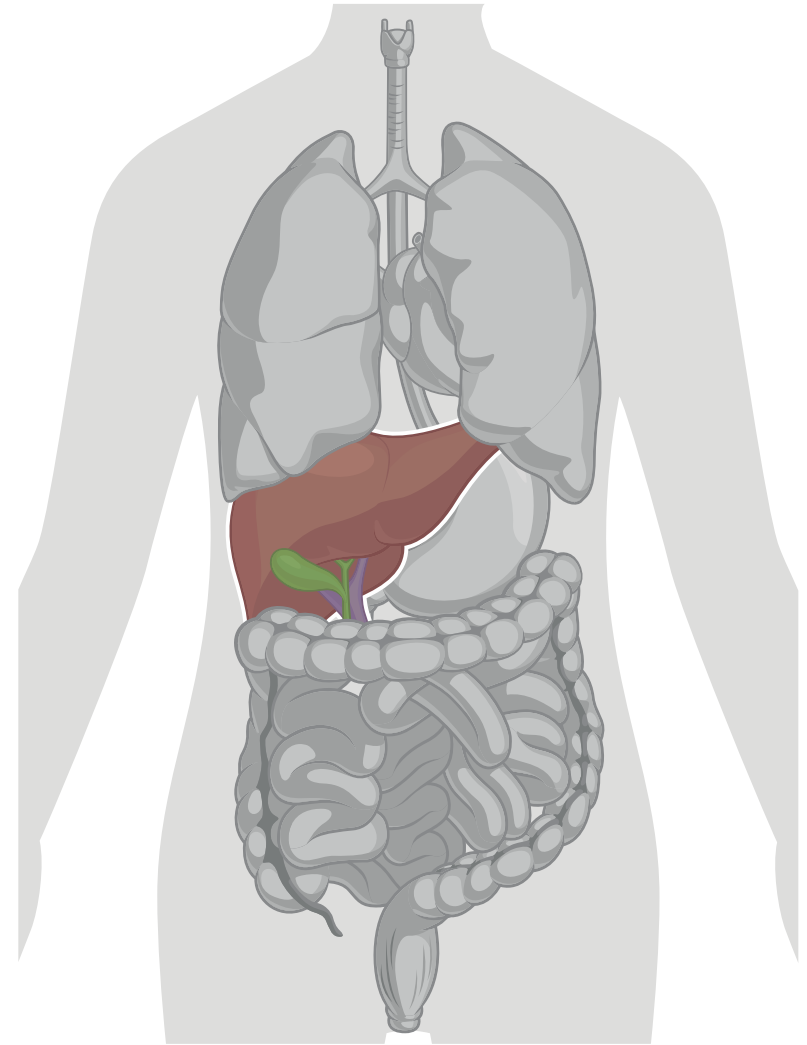
After Release

- Ask staff for help enrolling in health insurance or Medicaid before release
- Explore patient assistance programs that can help cover the cost of treatment

Use the QR code below to get connected to care.



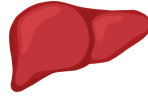
Hepatitis C in Prison and Jail



Adapted from:

What is Hepatitis C (HCV)?

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a virus that can damage your liver. It spreads when infected blood gets into your body. Most people don't have symptoms at first, but if left untreated, it can cause serious liver damage, including cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver failure, and death. There are medications that can cure hepatitis C. Many people in jails and prisons in the U.S. have hepatitis C.



How Do People Get Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C spreads through blood-to-blood contact. This usually happens when blood from someone who has HCV enters your body through a cut or opening in the skin.



Common ways people get hepatitis C:

- Sharing needles, cookers, cottons, or water when injecting drugs (*Rinsing or boiling equipment does not fully protect against HCV*)
- Sharing tattoo or piercing equipment (like needles or ink)
- Blood transfusions before 1992 (when better screening began)



Other possible ways it can spread:

- Sharing items like razors, toothbrushes, or nail clippers
- Sharing straws or bills used to snort drugs
- Unprotected sex where blood is present (especially if one partner has HIV)
- Fights that involve blood
- Handling blood without proper protection



You CANNOT get hepatitis C from:

- Hugging, kissing, or touching someone
- Sharing food, drinks, toilets, or showers
- Living in the same cell or unit
- Playing sports or working out



Are Hepatitis Services Provided in Prisons and Jails?

Access to hepatitis-related medical care is available in some prisons and jails, but it can vary widely between facilities. It's important to speak with medical staff to understand what testing, monitoring, vaccinations, or treatment options may be offered. Regular follow-up with medical providers is key.

Hepatitis C is Curable



Hepatitis C (HCV) is a curable infection for most people. Since 2013, several highly effective antiviral medications have become available. These treatments typically involve just a few weeks of pills and have a cure rate of over 95%. While some HCV infections may go away on their own, at least half of people will need treatment to fully clear the virus. Your provider will help determine the best course of treatment for you.

Vaccines for Hepatitis A and B



Although there is no vaccine for hepatitis C, vaccines for hepatitis A and hepatitis B are available. If you are living with HCV, it is especially important to be protected against hepatitis A and B to avoid further liver complications. Ask your provider about getting vaccinated.

Hepatitis C Testing



Testing for hepatitis C may include two steps:
Antibody Test – checks whether you've ever been exposed to the virus
Viral Load Test – confirms if the virus is still active in your body (a current infection)

After Being Cured



Even after successful treatment and cure, you can become re-infected with HCV. It's important to continue practicing harm reduction strategies to protect your liver and overall health.

How to Stay Healthy with Hepatitis C

Recommended:

Attend regular medical appointments
Learn about hepatitis C and understand your care

Avoid:

Alcohol (beer, wine, liquor)
Over-the-counter medications that contain acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) unless approved by your doctor