

Dangers of viral hepatitis:

- The virus can be transmitted unknowingly, since the infection remains often unnoticed.
- The liver is an organ that plays an important role in the handling of toxic substances. In a chronic hepatitis, the liver cells are destroyed by the individual own immune system and replaced with cells that cannot undertake the task of the liver (= Fibrosis).
- In case of Cirrhosis of the liver, the liver will continue to shrink and lose its function.
- At the end, one can develop cancer of the liver, but it is rarer than the cirrhosis.
- The therapy of acute hepatitis C and chronic hepatitis B and C can have strong side effects.

Hepatitis and HIV:

A co-infection with HIV and hepatitis B or C (or both) is widespread. People being HIV positive can get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B but depends on the state of the immune system. Therefore please clarify with a physician!

How can I protect myself against hepatitis?

Get vaccinated!

- Vaccines against hepatitis A and hepatitis B are available.
- If there is no immunity due to a previous hepatitis A or B infection, it is advisable to get vaccinated.
- Through a blood test, you can find out whether immunity exists.
- A three-part initial immunization with regular booster can provide lifelong protection.
- There is NO vaccination against hepatitis C.

Get tested!

- One can find out through a test whether he or she is infected with HIV. At Aids Hilfe Vienna, you can get tested anonymously.
- The earlier a hepatitis infection is detected, the better: So you can avoid serious health damage and has good preconditions for a treatment.

Protect yourself with condoms!

- Use condoms!
- The use of condoms protects both from several sexually transmitted diseases and from unwanted pregnancy.
- Use condoms for vaginal, anal, and oral sex.
- Even if both partners are tested positive for HIV or hepatitis condoms should always be used in order to prevent other sexually transmitted diseases.

Other protective measures

Hepatitis A:

- Personal hygiene, hygienic handling of food, regular hand washing.
- Avoid eating raw food and drinking unbottled water when traveling to countries with low hygienic standards.

Hepatitis B und C:

- Avoid sharing needles and tubules for snorting.
- When getting pierced or tattooed always make sure that the equipment is for single use only or is sterilized properly.
- Always use protective close when in contact with blood (e.g. first aid, fisting, etc.)
- Avert sharing objects which might be contaminated with blood (e.g. tooth brushes, razors, nail scissors, lube, etc.)



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HEPATITIS

facts & infos



AIDS HILFE

What is viral hepatitis?

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, which can be caused by viruses. There are different types of viruses. The most common are Hepatitis A, B, C viruses.

- Vaccination protects against hepatitis A and B!
- Condoms reduce the risk of infection with hepatitis!
- You should be tested for hepatitis B and hepatitis C!

Development of viral hepatitis:

The development of hepatitis depends on the type of virus and the individuals own immune system. The acute infection is often unnoticed, because it may asymptomatic or symptoms can be similar to the ones of influenza. If the acute infection does not heal on its own, the virus will continue to increase/develop and one can speak of chronic hepatitis, which can constrain the liver function.

- **Hepatitis A** always heals on its own. Hepatitis A does not reoccur after being infected once.
- **Hepatitis B** can run both acute and (in 5-10% of all cases) chronically. There are treatments for hepatitis B available, some of which are also effective against HIV.
- **Hepatitis C** runs chronically in up to 80% of all cases. Hepatitis C can cause serious long-term damage to the health, and is one of the major cause of diseases and deaths of people what are HIV-positive. There are treatment options for hepatitis C; the treatment regimen should always be decided on an individual basis.

	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Hepatitis C
How can I get infected?	The most common route of transmission of hepatitis A occurs through contaminated water and food (shellfish and seafood, raw fruit and vegetables) and unhygienic circumstances associated with it. A sexual transmission occurs especially in the case of anal sex without condom or oral- anal contact.	You can easily get infected with hepatitis B through sex (blood, sperm, saliva, vaginal secretion). Also, the virus can be transmitted during pregnancy and birth from the mother to the child. Moreover, one can get infected through blood during tattooing and piercing or common use of toothbrush and shaving kit, as well as intravenous drug use or redistribution of tubes for snorting.	Hepatitis C is communicated through blood and blood products. The virus can be transmitted during pregnancy and birth from the mother to the child. In particular, one can get infected through blood during tattooing and piercing or common use of toothbrush and shaving Kit, as well as intravenous drug use or redistribution of tubes for snorting. A sexual transmission with Hepatitis C is very rare.
Who are vulnerable groups?	People traveling to countries with hot weather conditions with low standards of hygiene Prisoners, prison staff, residents living in closed quarters (tight room, poor hygienic conditions) Health-and nursing staff	People that frequently change sexual partner Intravenous drug users Prisoners, prison staff, residents living in closed quarters (tight room, poor hygienic conditions) Health-and nursing staff.	Intravenous drug users People who frequently change sexual partners
Incubation period	10 - 40 days	1 - 6 months	0,5 - 6 months
Symptoms of acute infection	Flu-like symptoms: nausea, fatigue, headaches, pain under the right side of the ribs, moderate fever. In 1/3 of the cases the skin turns yellow, the urine brown and the stool pale.	In 2/3 of cases the acute infection is unnoticed. Otherwise, the symptoms resemble those of hepatitis A.	The acute infection remains usually unnoticed.
Treatment of the acute disease	There is no known effective treatment. Treatment of the symptoms.	There is no known effective treatment. Treatment of the symptoms.	Interferon for 6 months
Chronic course of disease	No	5 - 10 %	50 - 80 %
Treatment of the chronic disease.		Therapy can take up to months or even years (with Interferon) There is no guarantee of a cure.	Therapy can take up to months or even years (with Interferon) There is no guarantee of a cure.
Possible long term consequences		Cirrhosis of the liver, liver failure, cancer of the liver.	Cirrhosis of the liver, liver failure, cancer of the liver.
Life long immunity after recovery?	Yes	Yes	No