

HEP C NEWS

Spring 2013 Edition

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Regional HIV/AIDS Connection has been providing hep C education and support for many years. We strive to educate community members, clients and service providers about hep C transmission in order to lessen the spread of the virus. We also work with people living with and affected by hep C to support them with whatever they need. We encourage anyone who has a question or concern regarding hep C to stop by our agency. We would be happy to help you out!



Regional
HIV/AIDS
Connection

Community Inspired. Courage Driven.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In Middlesex-London, the annual average reported incidence rate of hepatitis C infections for females was highest between the ages of 25 and 29 years. For males, the rate was highest among those 40 to 49 years old.
- Since 2006, the incidence rate of hepatitis C infections reported in Middlesex-London has been significantly higher than the Ontario rate.
- The number of hepatitis C infections reported among males is almost twice as many as reported among females between 2000 and 2010

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS) database, extracted July 22, 2011

Want to know more about hepatitis C?
Contact Regional HIV/AIDS Connection to arrange a presentation!

HOW COUNTERPOINT EQUIPMENT PREVENTS HEPATITIS C TRANSMISSION

By: Nick Scrivos, IDU Outreach Worker

Most people know that you can get Hepatitis C from sharing syringes, but a lot of people don't know how all the other equipment Counterpoint gives out prevents the spread of HCV. This article can be used as a simple guide to understanding how HCV is spread from each piece of equipment and what the risks are.

Syringes: Hepatitis C can live outside of the body for a long time; it can live inside of a syringe for an even longer period of time. You only need microscopic amounts of the virus present to be infected. The virus can be present not only inside the hollow needle, but also inside the barrel of the syringe itself. Cleaning the syringe, even with bleach, still won't kill the hepatitis C virus all the time.



Tips: Counterpoint distributes 3cc syringes with replaceable tips. People often think that if they change the tip, they are safe. This is false: HIV and Hepatitis C can live in the barrel of the syringe, so replacing the tip will not prevent infection.

Cookers/Spoons: Hepatitis C can also live on surfaces for very long periods of time. Using a cooker or spoon that someone else has used means that that spoon or cooker can have HCV on the surface, in the mix, or in the wash.

Water: Using sterile water instead of tap or bottled water is good because it does not have chlorine, fluoride, sediment or dirt in it that can damage your veins and cause abscesses and other infections. However, HCV can live in many fluids it comes into contact with including the sterile water Counterpoint gives away. The water may not look dirty, but if it has come in contact with a needle, a cooker or a spoon that has already been used, you can get HCV from it.

Filters: Once a filter is used, it gets wet. When something is wet, bacteria can start to grow. Saving and reusing filters for a wash (or to use again) can cause serious bacterial infections and cotton fever. Like every other piece of equipment, if the filter comes into contact with HCV, then the virus will live on the filter and if the filter is reused you can get hepatitis C.



It is estimated that between 50%-80% of people who inject drugs have HCV and most are not sure how they got it. Many people do not get it from directly sharing syringes but exchanging and sharing much of the other equipment. Remember to use everything only once and to try and always have your own equipment.

RESILIENCY IN TOUGH TIMES

We all experience difficult times and hardships in life. It is through these times that we learn skills and find support to carry us forward. Some kind folks have shared their experiences with getting through challenging moments:

For me, it was to get educated and make plans to do something about it. It's all I can do. And by doing that, I can feel good about it. I've done something about it.

- Doug

I usually sit back and have a good cry as I find the release of the tears helps me. I might call a friend or family member.

I listen to music, usually 70s as it brings me back to a time when I was a young girl (woman) and life was good — no worries!

I do a lot of self talk

I go for walks

- Marilyn

I surround myself with positive, motivated people.

- Andy

HEP C CARE TEAM

By: Jesse Huntus, Hep C Outreach Worker

On Monday February 11, 2013, and Tuesday February 12, 2013, Keri Wheatley, (the Peer Support Worker) and Jesse Huntus (the HCV Outreach Worker) attended the Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program. This is a conference that all needle/syringe program workers and outreach/peer support workers from the hepatitis C Care teams across the province can attend. Speakers at the conference cover different topics relating to drug use, jail work, mental health and substance use, safer injecting practices, etc. Keri and Jesse also attended the hepatitis C Care Team Conference on Monday February 25, 2013, and Tuesday February 26, 2013. This conference covered different topics relating to hepatitis C, such as: new treatment research, hepatitis C research, and best practices relating to current treatment. This conference brings together different teams from across the province to connect and share resources and ideas to help provide the best possible care for our clients. If anyone is interested in finding out more about what we learned at these conferences, just let us know. You can give contact the Hepatitis C Care Team at 519.434.1601, or come to our office at Regional HIV/AIDS Connection. Remember you are welcome to join our weekly peer support group at RHAC on Thursdays from 2-4 and our monthly Lunch & Learns 12:30-1:30 every second Friday of the month.

HEPATITIS C WORD SEARCH

By: Zach Templeman, Hepatitis C Educator

ALCOHOL
 ANTIBODY
 BOCEPREVIR
 CHRONIC
 CIRRHOSIS
 COINFECTION
 DIAGNOSIS
 FIBROSIS
 GENOTYPE
 HCV
 HEPATITIS
 INTERFERON
 JAUNDICE
 LIVER
 PREVENTION
 REINFECTION
 RIBAVIRIN
 RNA TEST
 SPECIALIST
 STIGMA
 SVR
 SYMPTOMS

C	T	N	N	T	C	L	A	C	B	J	S	L	R	B	K	T	A	U	M
H	H	L	O	Q	P	N	H	O	E	I	G	E	E	L	L	S	R	H	O
E	V	R	Q	I	T	I	C	E	S	R	E	V	I	L	W	I	I	Q	F
L	X	H	O	I	T	E	E	O	P	Y	H	S	N	S	M	L	B	Q	Z
F	H	O	B	N	P	N	H	I	X	A	I	P	F	J	T	A	A	D	E
R	V	O	G	R	I	R	E	F	Q	R	T	L	E	Q	Q	I	V	F	N
C	D	H	E	E	R	C	C	V	T	I	C	I	C	K	B	C	I	E	V
Y	O	V	J	I	P	N	O	R	E	F	R	E	T	N	I	E	R	C	M
F	I	I	C	P	R	Y	Z	A	Q	R	K	O	I	I	H	P	I	I	R
R	E	E	N	M	Y	X	T	B	O	P	P	O	O	K	S	S	N	D	N
Z	J	L	M	F	S	I	S	O	R	B	I	F	N	W	U	M	U	N	A
R	C	L	M	F	E	M	V	H	N	A	L	C	O	H	O	L	W	U	T
O	O	Z	J	M	O	C	V	L	R	E	Y	M	P	D	A	E	A	A	E
J	W	E	P	T	F	E	T	D	I	A	G	N	O	S	I	S	I	J	S
I	S	P	P	H	T	T	U	I	D	G	M	G	B	U	H	V	K	T	T
V	V	M	A	E	Z	R	G	R	O	L	T	X	L	F	J	G	I	S	L
U	Y	C	C	K	F	F	X	X	C	N	L	S	F	A	K	G	Y	G	B
S	H	M	H	I	Y	O	D	D	J	P	F	V	Z	F	M	R	L	D	D
S	F	E	J	E	S	F	U	S	X	P	Y	H	D	A	J	V	U	R	J
O	X	S	Q	D	B	N	P	F	A	M	O	D	L	B	J	S	D	H	B

Q. What do you call a shoe made from a banana?

A. A Slipper.

It is important to take care of yourself whether that means reading a joke or spending time with friends. Doing the things that make you happy should become part of your routine. Self care can decrease how stressed you feel. Stress can suppress your immune system, which means that the less stressed you feel, the better. So, remember to take a moment each day to smile!

A TREATMENT EXPERIENCE

By: Anonymous

1) What kinds of tests did you get to find out you had hep C?

First a blood test showed hep C and then a liver biopsy confirmed what stage I was in

2) What genotype did you have?

1A

3) Is there anything in particular that you did to keep your liver healthy?

I stopped drinking alcohol and I didn't take any medication.

4) How long did your treatment last?

16 weeks

5) What medication did you take during treatment?

Daily, I took five pills of ribavarin; three in the morning and two at night. (I also took) two pills in the morning and two pills in the evening. (I) don't know if these were a placebo or a new test drug. Once a week, I injected myself with 90cc of PEG Interferon.

6) Did you experience any side-effects of treatment?

Yes, the needle gave me flu like symptoms. I had joint pain & aches, poor appetite, rash, itchy skin, hair loss and weight loss. I was depressed, irritable, tired, & exhausted. I was about to quit treatment after 12 weeks because I felt so bad, but the study nurse was very helpful and encouraging.

7) Was there anything that you feel helped you make it through treatment?

Yes, support from my wife, family, & friends. Medical marijuana helped to reduce and control side effects. It also helped with my appetite. As I stated above, the study nurse was very helpful and encouraging and she would show me the progress I was making through the blood work they were taking.

8) How did you feel after treatment ended?



Relieved. After 2 weeks I started to gain energy and after 4 weeks I felt like myself again.

9) What are your next steps?

I will be in a follow up study. I will be going to London University Hospital for blood test 4 times a year for 3 years to see if or what changes there are in the liver, if the virus returns or not, and any possible side effects.

10) Do you have any advice for anyone who may be interested in starting treatment?

Just do it. If a 16 week treatment can give you 16 more years it is well worth it.

TESTING:	 <p>London InterCommunity Health Centre</p>	<p>659 Dundas St London, ON N5W 2Z1 P: 519-660-0874</p>	 <p>Regional HIV/AIDS Connection</p> <p><small>Community Inspired. Courage Driven.</small></p>	<p>#30 - 186 King St London, ON N6A 1C7 P: 519-434-1601</p>
	<p>Mondays 1pm-3:30pm Drop-in, no appointment required Testing is confidential and a health card is not required</p>	<p>Thursdays 1pm-4pm Drop-in, no appointment required Testing is confidential and a health card is not required</p>		

NUTRITION FOR THOSE LIVING WITH BOTH HEPATITIS C AND DIABETES

By: Joanne Veldhorst, Team Lead: Hepatitis C Care Team

Research has shown a connection between hepatitis C infection (HCV) and type II diabetes. The exact nature of the relationship between diabetes and chronic HCV infection is poorly understood. Some of the risk factors for diabetes include having a close family member with diabetes, being overweight or obese, age, and being of a certain cultural background e.g. Hispanic or African. Diabetes is a chronic condition where you have high sugar levels in your blood either because the body does not produce enough insulin or that the body does not respond to the insulin it produces.

Liver inflammation, as with HCV infection, has been linked to diabetes as it may decrease the body's ability to respond to the insulin. It is possible that HCV infection may speed up the progression to diabetes.

Diagnosing and treating prediabetes (when the body is struggling to use insulin to break down blood sugar as it normally would before it develops into diabetes) and diabetes is particularly important in the presence of HCV infection, as it has been shown to increase scarring of the liver, decrease the body's responsiveness to HCV treatment and lead to poor outcomes after liver transplants.

Screening for prediabetes and diabetes is done with a glucose tolerance test. What is required for this test is: having nothing to eat/drink for 12 hours (except water), having some blood drawn then drinking a sweet orange drink, and after waiting for 2 hours having some more blood drawn.

If you have a family member living with diabetes, are over 40, overweight, or are Hispanic, Asian, African, or Native and are living with Hepatitis C, please speak with your doctor or nurse practitioner about being screened for prediabetes and diabetes.

Green Beans with Lemon and Almonds

Contributed By: Zach Templeman, Hepatitis C Educator; RHAC

Ingredients:

1 lb Green Beans
 1/4 cup Almonds, coarsely chopped or sliced
 1Tbsp Olive Oil
 2 Tbsp Lemon juice
 1/4 tsp finely grated lemon rind
 Pepper, to taste

Directions:

Heat a medium pan and toast almonds on medium heat until golden brown.
 Boil Green beans in salted water until bright green, about 4-5 minutes.
 Whisk together Olive oil, lemon juice, lemon rind and pepper.
 Transfer green beans to dinner plates and top with lemon dressing and almonds.

HEALTHY RECIPES

Beet and Butternut Soup

Contributed By: Mbaka Wadham, Multicultural HIV Prevention Coordinator: RHAC

Ingredients

- 3 medium beets
- 2 carrots
- 1 small butternut squash
- 1 cup chopped kale
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 onion
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 cup coconut milk
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Cube the beets. Cube the onions. Peel the garlic. Cut the carrots in chunks. Toss with olive oil. Put in a roasting pan. Halve the butternut squash scoop out the seeds and prick the skin a few times with a fork. Stick on a cookie sheet skin up. Roast the butternut and the other veggies for 30min at 425F. Remove from oven and wait 10-15 for squash to cool. Using a spoon scoop out the flesh and dump in a waiting soup pot. Add the other roasted veggies. Add the coconut milk and broth. Bring to a boil. Add the chopped kale and reduce to a simmer. Cook 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Puree the whole thing with an immersion blender.

Want to make your own Ensure? It's easy!

- 2 tbsp infant formula-powder
- 2-4oz water (to desired thickness)
- 1 pudding cup (of any flavor)

Mix ingredients together vigorously with a fork or in a blender.

Enjoy!



Lentils n' Rice

Contributed By: Meredith Fraser, Director of Education: RHAC

Ingredients:

- Rice (use whatever type you like best)
- 1 19oz can lentils, drained and rinsed
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 small onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 stalk of celery, chopped
- Oil (olive, canola, etc)
- Cumin
- Black pepper
- Salt
- Water or vegetable stock
- Low sodium soy sauce
- Flax oil (optional)

Directions:

If cooking rice from scratch, prepare according to favourite method. If using leftover rice, heat it in the microwave or on the stovetop. Cook the onions, celery, carrots and garlic in some oil until they are tender. Add the lentils, cumin and pepper (to taste) and a bit of water to prevent the mixture from sticking. Heat the lentils through. Serve over rice drizzled with flax oil (or olive oil) and a bit of low sodium soy sauce.

REGIONAL HIV/AIDS CONNECTION

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www.hivaidsconnection.ca



Look for more info on our
website!
www.hivaidsconnection.ca

If you are infected with, affected by or at-risk for hepatitis C, Regional HIV/AIDS Connection has services for you! Come in and chat with us and we will do our best to help you with whatever you need.

Looking for information? Here's how we can help:

- We can answer any questions you have about the virus and how to protect yourself from getting it
- We can provide you with tips and information on living with the virus and help you make informed choices
- We offer monthly lunches with guest speakers where you can learn about and discuss specific topics related to hep C, as well as meet other people living with the virus
- We provide presentations to educate people about hepatitis C

Looking for support? Here's how we can help:

- We can provide referrals to treatment providers
- We can help with basic needs such as housing, applying for finances, connecting with other services in the city, etc.
- We offer casual counselling if you are looking for someone to talk to
- We can accompany you to appointments and act as a support and advocate
- We offer support groups to connect you with other people living with hep C

HEP C PEER SOCIAL

2-4pm

Every Thursday

Location: Community Room, Regional HIV/AIDS Connection, 186 King street

The hep C Peer Social is a chance for people who are either currently living with, or who have been through hep C, to connect with other people going through similar situations. It is a chance to come out, socialize and meet new people. Light snacks and refreshments are available.

HEP C LUNCH & LEARN

12:30-1:30pm

Second Friday of every month

Location: Board Room, Regional HIV/AIDS Connection, 186 King street

The hep C Lunch & Learn is for people living with hep C, or who are personally affected by it, to listen to information and guest speakers on topics related to hep C. Free lunch is provided. Spots fill up fast so, please RSVP if possible, to make sure you get a seat.

For more information on either of these events, or to RSVP, please contact:
Zach, Hepatitis C Educator 519-434-1601 ext 226

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