



# HCSP FACT SHEET

HCV ADVOCATE

• HCV EDUCATION AND SUPPORT •

## Top 11 Counseling Messages

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### Foreword

When someone is diagnosed with hepatitis C there are many messages we can give to advise the newly diagnosed person during this difficult period. The person can be counseled about HCV transmission and prevention, but the key is to talk with the person and offer messages that alleviate some of the fear and offer hope.

### Our list for the top eleven post counseling messages include (not in any particular order):

- **HCV Antibody Positive:** If only an HCV antibody test was performed remind the person that they will need to have a viral load test performed to find out whether the HCV infection is resolved or if they are currently infected with HCV.
- **Don't Panic:** For the majority of people diagnosed with HCV, liver disease progression is slow and if there is serious disease progression it usually takes many years.
- **Liver Monitoring:** See a medical provider on a regular basis for health monitoring.
- **Vaccinate against HAV & HBV:** If people have never been infected with or vaccinated against hepatitis A or hepatitis B they should begin the vaccination series as soon as they can to prevent getting another hepatitis virus on top of an already compromised liver.
- **Lifestyle Changes:** There are many things people can do to help them stay healthy, such as eating a healthy and nutritious diet, avoiding or cutting back on alcohol, cigarette smoking or any substances that could potentially harm the liver. Don't forget to drink plenty of water.
- **Debunk Myths:** There are many myths about hepatitis C. One common myth is that hepatitis C is a death sentence, and we know that for most people this is not the case.
- **Avoid Mega Doses of Vitamins:** Mega doses of vitamins especially Vitamin A and D should be avoided (unless prescribed by a medical provider) because they can damage the liver. Tell your doctor about any herbs or vitamins you are taking.

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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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Top 11 Counselling Messages

- **Avoid Raw/Undercooked Shellfish:** People with any liver disease should avoid raw or undercooked shellfish because of the potential of severe HAV and *Vibrio vulnificus* infections.
- **HCV Transmission/Prevention:** Talk about the ways that HCV is transmitted and how to prevent transmission, such as not sharing razors or anything that may have blood on it. Also bring in messages about how HCV is not transmitted.
- **Join a Support Group:** One of the best ways to find out about hepatitis C and get much needed support is to join an HCV support group in person or online. Support group members have been in the same “place” and can help other members deal with the many aspects of being newly diagnosed.
- **Consider treatment**—We now have medications that can cure nine out of ten people who take them. The treatment period is only 12 weeks, but treatment is expensive. Take the time to learn about these medications before making a decision about treatment.

*Related publications:*

- **An Overview of HCV Diagnostic Tests**  
[www.hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets\\_pdf/diagnostic.pdf](http://www.hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets_pdf/diagnostic.pdf)
- **Non-Invasive Markers of Liver Fibrosis**  
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- **Reading a Lab Report: A Basic Primer**  
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*For more information*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</b><br/><a href="http://www.cdc.gov/Hepatitis">www.cdc.gov/Hepatitis</a></li> <li>• <b>Mayo Clinic:</b><br/><a href="http://www.mayoclinic.com">www.mayoclinic.com</a></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MedlinePlus:</b><br/><a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/medlineplus.html">www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/medlineplus.html</a></li> <li>• <b>National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC)</b><br/><a href="http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/index.aspx">http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/index.aspx</a></li> </ul> |
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