

# Hepatitis C symptoms

- People with hep C often do not have any symptoms.
- People often dismiss symptoms as just part of getting older.
- The only way to know if you have hep C is to have a blood test.

Most people with chronic hepatitis C do not experience any symptoms until their liver is already damaged, which can take many years.<sup>1</sup> That is why it is very important to get tested for hepatitis C if you could have been exposed to the virus. You can read about how you can get hepatitis C here:

[hepatitisaustralia.com/hepatitis-c-prevention](http://hepatitisaustralia.com/hepatitis-c-prevention)

If you do get symptoms, they could include:

## Fatigue and sleep problems

Fatigue means feeling very tired and lacking energy even after a full night's sleep. Sleep problems include difficulty falling asleep, waking up a lot, or sleeping too much (eight hours sleep per night is generally enough for an adult).<sup>2</sup>

## Aches, pains and fevers

These can come and go and include fever, chills, headaches, tiredness and muscle or joint pain. They usually last for a week or less but can last longer.<sup>1</sup>

## Mood swings, anxiety and depression

Because hep C can affect the amount of certain chemicals in your body, it can cause mood swings or other neurological symptoms such as anxiety, feelings of hopelessness or helplessness, irritability, lack of interest in usual activities, periods of sadness or brain fog (difficulty thinking clearly, concentrating and expressing words).<sup>3,4</sup>

## Feeling sick, poor appetite and indigestion

Hep C can make you feel sick in the stomach (nausea), which can then affect your appetite.<sup>1</sup> Although there is usually no vomiting, it can be very uncomfortable.

## Skin rashes and itchy skin

These may come and go and include itchiness, blisters, white spots, tightened skin, spider web patterns and purple patches.<sup>5</sup>

## Dry eyes

This can be due to inflammation of the glands that produce tears.<sup>6</sup>



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## Dry mouth and mouth ulcers

These symptoms can lead to bad breath, tooth decay, cracked lips, sore mouth and throat. It can also cause difficulty eating, swallowing and tooth sensitivity.<sup>7</sup>

## Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent) is more common among people with hep C than the general population. It can lead to nerve damage, kidney disease, heart disease, eye disorders, stroke and serious skin ulcers.<sup>8</sup>

## Other symptoms

There are also other, less common symptoms that can occur, including blood, kidney and skin conditions, and disorders of the lymph and nervous systems.

## Things to consider

All of the above symptoms can also be caused by other health problems. Gender, health history, eating habits, lifestyle, age, stress levels, and alcohol and other drug intake (whether prescribed or illicit) can also affect how you experience living with hep C.

In some cases, a person with hep C can keep feeling well while their liver is becoming more damaged. In other cases, hep C symptoms can mask the symptoms of other health problems. Finally, symptoms of hep C don't always get worse and they sometimes appear in clusters (several at once).

If you are at risk of hep C, you should talk to your doctor or specialist for more information. If you do have hep C, there is a safe and effective cure.

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