



6. Hepatitis C ➤ Glossary of Terms

Antibodies

These are produced by the body to fight infections caused by bacteria, viruses or other substances. In the case of hepatitis C, antibodies are produced to fight the hepatitis C virus, and stay in the body forever even when a person no longer has the virus.

Antibody Test

A blood test looking for antibodies rather than the virus itself.

Blood Awareness

Being alert to the potential or actual presence of blood in any situation or environment.

Bulk Billing

The Australian government subsidises health care for people who have a Medicare Card. Bulk billing means the service is free. No extra payment is required

Chronic

An illness or medical condition that lasts for longer than 6 months.

Cirrhosis

Extensive and permanent damage of the liver. Cirrhosis prevents the liver from functioning normally. Approximately 5-10% of people with hepatitis C get cirrhosis.

Co-Infection

This means infection with more than one virus. Hepatitis co-infection means infection with hepatitis C and another virus, such as HIV and/or hepatitis B.

Complementary Therapies

Treatments provided by non-medical practitioners, such as Chinese medicine, acupuncture, herbs, naturopathy, homeopathy, etc.

Condom

A thin rubber (latex) bag which fits on a man's erect penis to stop pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

Confidentiality

A rule that stops health workers, doctors and interpreters from repeating what people tell them or talking about their health to other people. A worker can only repeat what a client says with the client's permission or in very special situations.

Counsellor

A professional who listens to people talk about personal concerns and helps them find a solution. Counsellors follow the rules of confidentiality. Counsellors work at places like community health clinics, mental health services and Family Planning clinics.

Direct Acting Antivirals (DDAs)

Direct Acting Antivirals. These are the new drugs used to treat hepatitis C.

Diagnosis

The disease or illness a doctor decides a patient has after checking for signs and symptoms, taking a medical history, doing an examination and tests.

Discrimination

Treating someone unfairly because they are different (immigrants, women, persons living with hepatitis C etc). In Australia many types of discrimination are against the law.

Disease

Illness, sickness

Fibroscan

A painless test to determine how much liver damage is present.

Genotype

The specific type of hepatitis C virus a person has. There are at least 6 different genotypes of the hepatitis C virus. Each genotype is treated with a different combination of medication. The genotype does not refer to the severity of liver disease.

Hepatitis

Means inflammation of the liver. Too much alcohol and some viruses can cause hepatitis. The most common forms of viral hepatitis are A, B and C.

HIV

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus which can cause AIDS.

Infection

Disease caused by a micro-organism (germ) in or on the body. Infections may lead to the infected person becoming ill. Infections can be caused by viruses, bacteria, fungi or parasites.

Injecting

Using a needle and syringe to put drugs into the blood stream, under the skin or into the muscle.

Injecting Drug User (IDU)

A term used to describe a person who takes drugs by using a needle and syringe to put drugs into the blood stream or a muscle.

Interferon

A substance produced by the body to help defend itself against viral infection. It is also produced artificially and used as a medicine to treat hepatitis C.

Monitor

To have regular check-ups to find out how hepatitis C is progressing or developing.

Side Effect

An unintended reaction to a medication.

Social Worker

A professional person with special training who talks to people about their concerns and helps them find a solution to problems. Social workers follow the rules of confidentiality.

Test

A way of finding an illness by taking blood or body fluids from a person and sending them to a laboratory for examination.

Transmission

The passing of a disease from one person to another.

Treatment

Something that a person does so that they can stay healthy or get better. Treatments can involve taking medicine, complementary therapies and/or changes in lifestyle.

Viral Load

The amount of virus (hepatitis C) that is found in a person's blood if they are infected with that virus.

Virus

A germ (micro-organism, microbe) which antibiotics cannot fight. HIV, hepatitis A, B and C are viruses that cannot be treated by antibiotics but can be treated by antiviral drugs.