

World Hepatitis Day is marked globally on 28 July. This is part of a worldwide campaign to see an end to viral hepatitis. In 2024 the national theme is *It's time for action*, reminding us that that hepatitis C and liver health remains an important issue for our community and that acting now is vital. This year landmarks around Australia glowed green on World Hepatitis Day to raise awareness about the campaign.

# World Hepatitis Day 28 July

## DON'T PUT IT OFF - TAKE ACTION NOW



**Do you know your hep C status?** Find out if you don't know.



**Hep C can be cured.** Treatment is simple.



**Do you need liver health monitoring?** Ask your doctor.



**A healthy liver is vital to all of us.**

## HEP C AND BLEEDING DISORDERS

In Australia many people with bleeding disorders acquired hepatitis C from their plasma-derived clotting factor treatment products or other blood products before 1993. Several safety measures were introduced by 1993 and the risk of bloodborne viruses from plasma-derived clotting factor products in Australia is now considered to be extremely low. But many people in our community live on with the consequences of those early infections.

**If you ever had a blood product before 1993, including blood transfusions and plasma-derived clotting factor concentrates, you could be at risk of hepatitis C.**

Is this you or someone you know? Now is the time to talk to your doctor about a hep C test - and have treatment to be cured, if you do have hep C! Hep C tests are simple blood tests.

## WHO IS AT RISK?

It's estimated that 1 in 5 Australians do not know they have hep C.

For some people with bleeding disorders, it has been a surprise to find out they were exposed to hepatitis C, especially if they only had one or two treatments over their lifetime.

This includes:

- women who carry the gene
- women and men with mild haemophilia or VWD



## TAKING ACTION

Hep C treatments now are radically different to the early interferon treatments - a once-daily tablet, few if any side-effects and very high cure rates.

Most Australians with bleeding disorders and hep C have now been cured – but some need ongoing care of their liver health.



## POST CURE LIVER HEALTH

Were you cured of hep C? Has your liver recovered?

You might think it's all OK, but it's easy to miss symptoms of liver disease. Ignoring your liver health can have serious consequences.

If you don't know the state of your liver health when you were cured, contact your hepatitis doctor or your GP to check your liver test results. **Find out if you need ongoing follow-up with a liver specialist.**

## REMEMBER

If you had **cirrhosis or extensive scarring** before being cured of hep C, you will still need to have a **liver ultrasound scan every 6 months** long-term.

Sadly, some people with bleeding disorders have very advanced liver disease due to long term hep C infection. Close liaison between liver specialists and Haemophilia Treatment Centres is important for treatment and care. Research into management of advanced liver disease is ongoing.

**Q: Can I have gene therapy if I've had hep C?**

**A: Yes**

...as long as you have been cured or you are HCV PCR negative (no active virus in your blood) and your liver is showing signs that it is functioning normally. Talk to your doctor about this and they may refer you to a liver specialist for a liver assessment with an ultrasound, and blood tests to show that your liver is healthy.

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## How can you keep your liver in good shape?

A healthy liver is important to us all. Some tips from our hepatitis specialists:

- 1 Have a balanced diet
- 2 Stay active and maintain a healthy weight
- 3 Avoid or minimise alcohol intake
- 4 Take care of your mental health and wellbeing
- 5 Ask your doctor if you need liver health monitoring.

**FIND OUT MORE AT:**  
[www.haemophilia.org.au/healthy-liver](http://www.haemophilia.org.au/healthy-liver)

## PERSONAL STORIES

We are grateful to our community members for sharing their experiences with hep C.

You can read their stories on the HFA website at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/HFA-hepc-stories>.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit:

- [www.worldhepatitisday.org.au](http://www.worldhepatitisday.org.au)
- The HFA World Hepatitis Day page:  
[www.haemophilia.org.au/world-hep-day](http://www.haemophilia.org.au/world-hep-day)

As a Partner in the national World Hepatitis Day Campaign, HFA works with Hepatitis Australia and the state and territory Haemophilia Foundations on our awareness campaign and is committed to making a difference on hepatitis C in Australia.