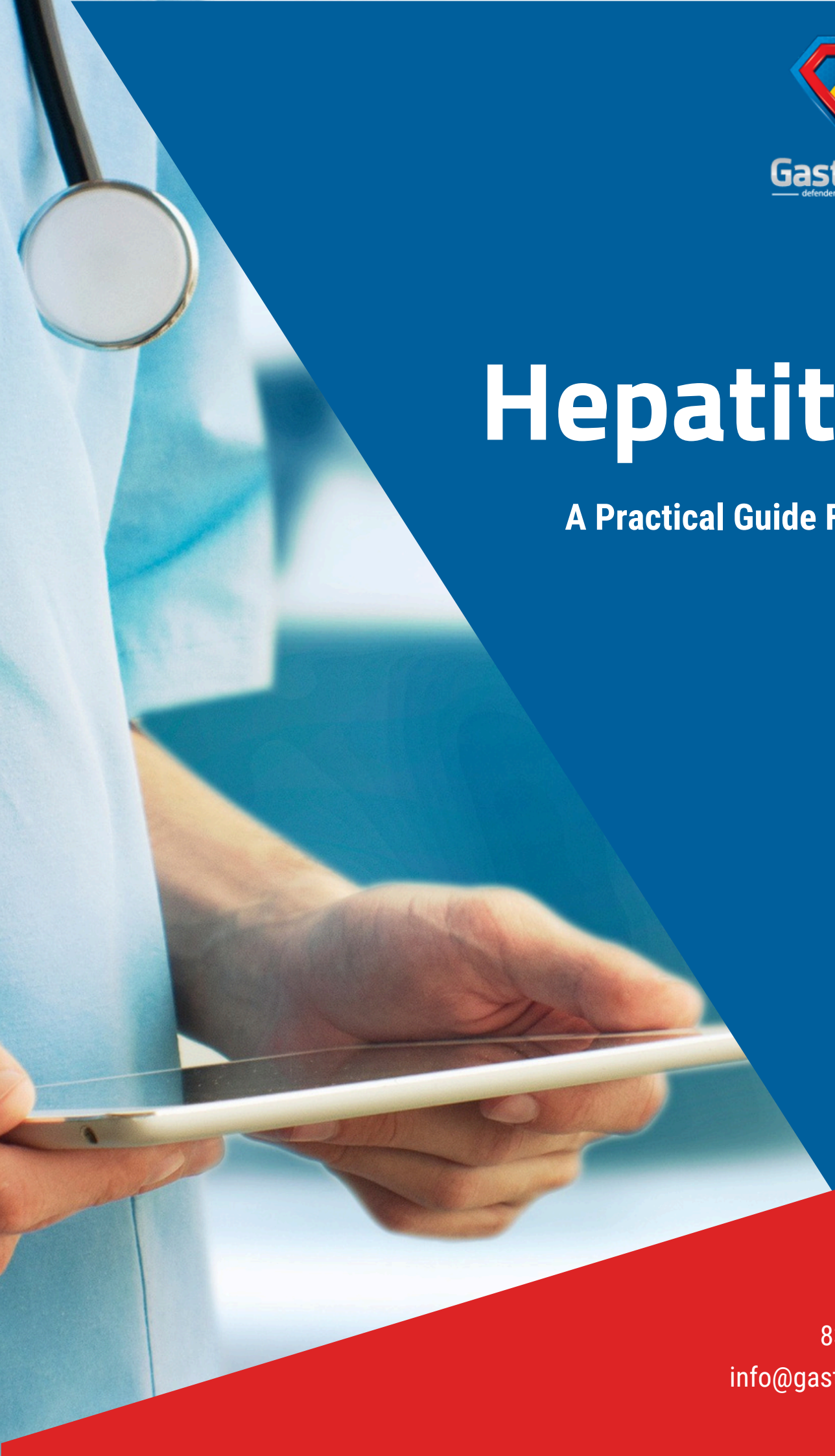

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Hepatitis C

A Practical Guide For Patients

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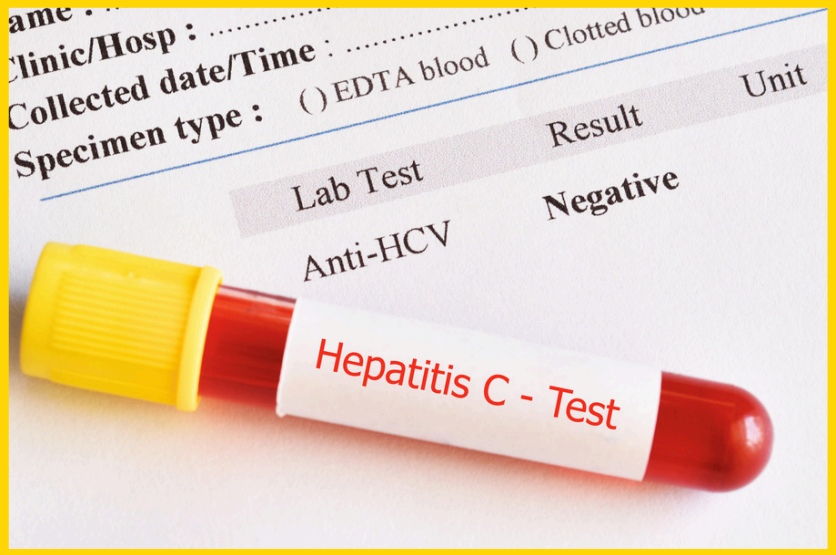
Introduction: Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a viral infection caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV) that primarily affects the liver. Many people do not know they are infected because symptoms can remain silent for years. Over time, the infection may cause liver inflammation, fibrosis, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer. The good news is that modern antiviral treatments can cure most cases, making early testing and treatment critical for long-term health.



Key Takeaways

- Caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV).
- Spread through blood-to-blood contact.
- Often silent for years before symptoms appear.
- Can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer if untreated.
- Now highly curable with direct-acting antivirals (DAAs).

What Causes Hepatitis C?

Known Causes

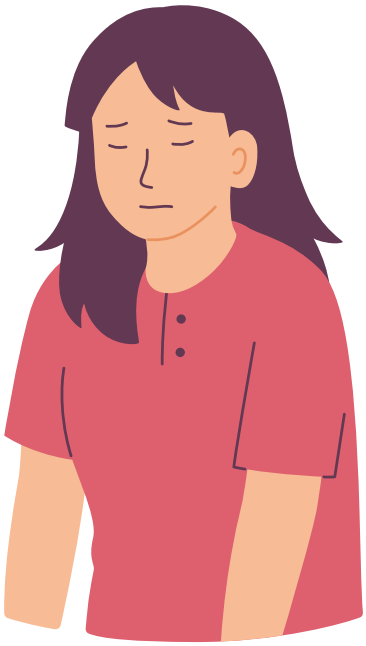
The virus spreads mainly through blood-to-blood contact. Common sources include sharing needles, unscreened blood transfusions (before 1992), unsterile medical equipment, and sometimes sexual contact. Babies born to infected mothers can also contract it. Unlike hepatitis A or B, there is currently no vaccine for hepatitis C.

Common Signs & Symptoms

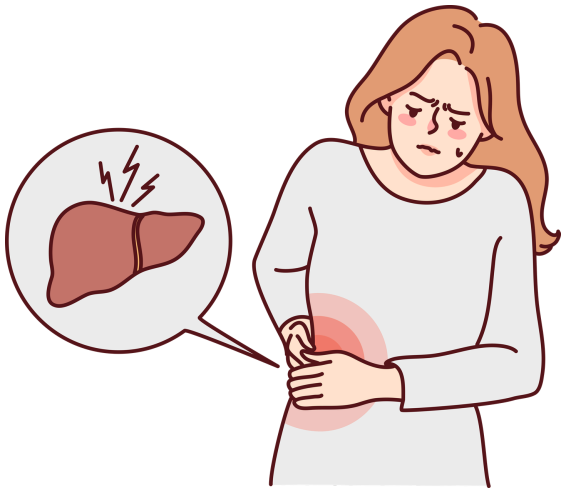
Many people remain symptom-free. When symptoms appear, they may include fatigue, abdominal pain, nausea, loss of appetite, joint pain, dark urine, and jaundice.

Core Symptoms Include:

- Fatigue and weakness
- Abdominal discomfort
- Nausea and loss of appetite
- Dark urine
- Yellowing of skin and eyes (jaundice)



Severe cases can also cause:



- Progressive liver fibrosis
- Cirrhosis
- Portal hypertension
- Liver failure
- Hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer)

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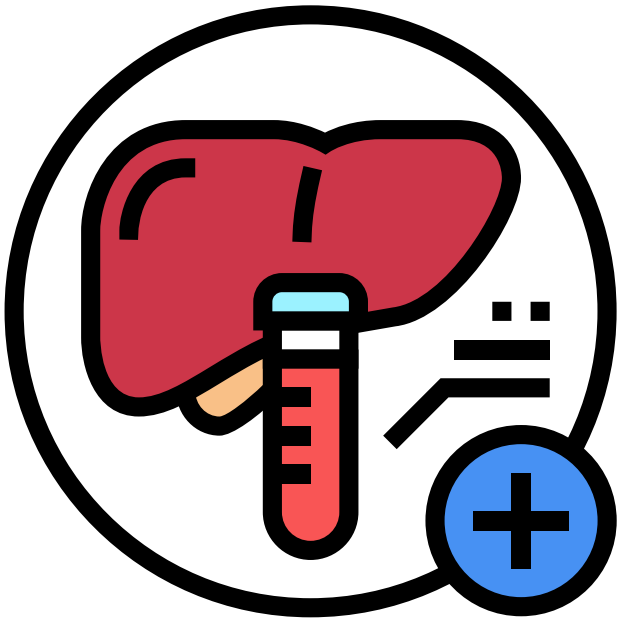
Diagnosis & Medical Testing

Diagnosis of aDiagnosis involves blood tests for HCV antibodies, viral load testing, and imaging or liver biopsy to evaluate liver damage and guide treatment decisions.eosinophilic gastritis involves clinical evaluation, blood tests for eosinophilia or elevated IgE, and stool studies to exclude infections. Endoscopy with gastric biopsy is essential, confirming eosinophilic infiltration in the stomach after ruling out parasites, autoimmune disease, or malignancy.

Diagnostic Tools

- **HCV antibody test –** Screens for infection
- **HCV RNA (viral load test) –** Confirms active infection
- **Genotype testing –** Guides treatment choice
- **Liver function tests –** Assess inflammation
- **FibroScan®/MRI/biopsy –** Detect fibrosis or cirrhosis



Diet

A healthy, balanced diet supports liver recovery. Avoid alcohol completely, limit processed foods, and focus on fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains to reduce liver strain.

Key Insights

- **Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables**

- **Choose lean proteins like fish, poultry, and legumes**

- **Avoid alcohol completely**
- **Limit fried, fatty, and processed foods**
- **Include whole grains**

- **Stay hydrated**

Medications & Treatment Options

Hepatitis C is now highly curable with direct-acting antivirals (DAAs), which eliminate the virus in most patients within 8–12 weeks.

Treatment Options

- **Direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) –** Cure infection in most patients
- **Antivirals tailored to genotype –** Personalized therapy
- **Supportive care –** For liver inflammation
- **Liver monitoring –** Ongoing tests during treatment
- **Liver transplant –**
  For end-stage disease

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Advanced Therapies & Procedures

In advanced cases, treatment may include liver transplantation and experimental therapies under clinical trials to reverse liver damage and improve long-term outcomes.

Therapy Options

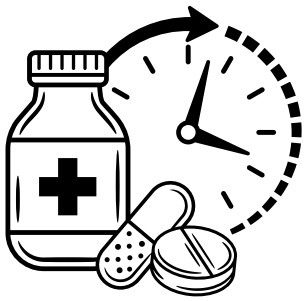
- **Liver transplantation for irreversible cirrhosis**
- **Ongoing surveillance for liver cancer**
- **Clinical trial therapies for advanced fibrosis**
- **Intensive antiviral treatment combinations**
- **Post-transplant antiviral therapy**

Coping With Hepatitis C

Coping involves medication adherence, avoiding alcohol, healthy lifestyle changes, stress management, and regular medical follow-ups to track liver health.

Practical Strategies

- **Take medications as prescribed**



- **Avoid alcohol and smoking**
- **Eat a liver-healthy diet**

- **Stay physically active within limits**
- **Practice stress management**

- **Keep regular liver check-ups**

FAQS About
Hepatitis C

Q1: Is Hepatitis C curable?
A: Yes, with modern DAAs, most people are cured within weeks.

Q2: Can I get reinfected after being cured?
A: Yes, immunity is not permanent, so reinfection is possible.

Q3: How is Hepatitis C different from Hepatitis B?
A: Hepatitis B can be prevented with a vaccine; Hepatitis C currently cannot.

Q4: Should I be tested even without symptoms?
A: Yes, especially if you had blood transfusions before 1992 or risk factors like IV drug use.

Take Action

If you experience **hepatitis C**, don't ignore them. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent complications. Schedule a consultation with GastroDoxs for expert guidance on managing your digestive health.

Visit **GastroDoxs.com** to schedule an appointment and access more resources on digestive health.

Your health matters
take the next step
today!

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

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