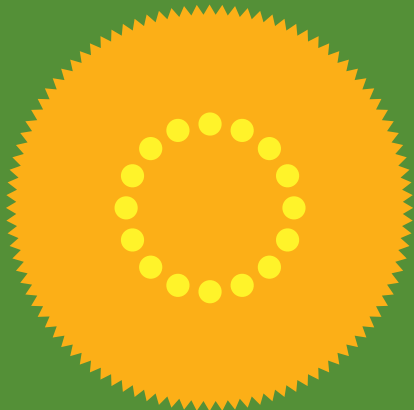


**i-base**

**Pocket size**

# **Hepatitis C** **for people with HIV**



**March 2017**

**This leaflet  
is about  
coinfection with  
both hepatitis C  
(HCV) and HIV.**



**Web links are for  
more information.**

**HIV is now easy to treat  
and HCV can be cured  
(with DAAs).**

**The meds work very  
well with low risk of side  
effects.**

**HIV meds are now  
widely available in every  
country.**

**Getting DAAs is more  
difficult, even in the UK.**

DAA = direct acting antiviral.



[i-base.info/DAAs](http://i-base.info/DAAs)

## **Finding a doctor**

**Finding out you have HCV can be difficult, especially if you have been HIV positive for many years.**

**Or perhaps you may have known about HCV for a long time and are only now thinking about treatment.**

**Whatever your situation, many people have both infections. HCV is usually a slow infection.**

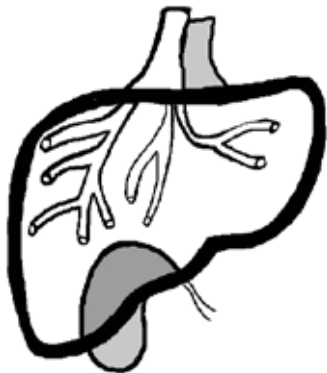


[i-base.info/hepC](http://i-base.info/hepC)

**DAAs cure HCV in more than 95% of people - from 1 or 2 pills a day, usually for only 12 weeks.**

**You will need a doctor that understands coinfection.**

**If you have different doctors for HIV and HCV, they need to work with each other.**



## Diagnosing HCV

Two tests are needed:

1. An **HCV antibody test**.

A positive antibody result means that you either have HCV now – or that you had it before and cleared it.

A negative result might also mean that you caught HCV recently. This test will not detect early HCV because it can take 6-24 weeks after infection for HCV antibodies to develop.

Also, if your CD4 count is less than 200, you may not make antibodies to HCV.



2. An **HCV viral load (RNA) test** will confirm or rule out active infection.

HCV viral load tests look for the virus in the same way as HIV viral load tests.

If you have detectable HCV viral load, it means that you have current HCV infection.

If your HCV viral load is undetectable, a second test should be done six months later.

Two undetectable viral load results show that your immune system has cleared HCV.

## Other tests for your HCV care

These other tests are important for monitoring your health

- HCV viral load (RNA)
- HCV genotype (important for treatment options).
- Hep B and hep A.
- Complete blood count (CBC) and blood clotting time.
- Liver enzyme tests (ALT, AST, albumin and GGT)
- Fibroscan or alternative non-invasive test.



## Checking your liver

In the UK, non-invasive tests like a FibroScan are used to measure liver damage.

This has replaced the need for liver biopsy in most cases.



[www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=I\\_E4ZGmKooA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_E4ZGmKooA)

In this YouTube video, Dr Sanjay Baghani from the Royal Free Hospital in London shows how a Fibroscan works.

## New HCV drugs

Since 2014, many direct acting antivirals (DAAs) have been approved and others are in development.

DAAs have very high cure rates from short-course oral treatment and few side effects.

The drugs are not expensive to make, but the price charged to the NHS is very high.

*Current DAAs include:*

sofosbuvir, ledipasvir, simeprevir, daclatasvir, ombitasvir, paritaprevir/r, dasabuvir, elbasvir, grazoprevir and velapatasvir.



[i-base.info/DAAs](http://i-base.info/DAAs)

All hepC guidelines now recommend DAAs, sometimes with ribavirin, but they need to be chosen carefully.

## **Older HCV drugs**

For many years HCV was treated with pegylated interferon (PEG-IFN) plus ribavirin (RBV).

These drugs are less effective, especially against some HCV genotypes.

They involve longer treatment with more difficult side effects.

In the UK, some people will still be offered PEG-IFN and RBV.

## Getting new HCV meds in the UK

DAAs are available free on the NHS, but they may not always be available to everyone who has HCV.

Only people with the most advanced liver disease are getting priority to DAAs. Retreatment is not available, for example, if you become reinfected.

Some people are buying generic DAAs online (at much lower prices) to get better and faster treatment.

## Buying new HCV meds online

Anyone in the UK can buy medicines for personal use from an online pharmacy.

Online generic DAAs cost about £1200 (vs. more than £30,000 paid by the NHS).

In some countries generic DAAs cost less than £500. Your HIV doctor should be able to advise you on which meds would work for you and on extra monitoring tests.



[i-base.info/qa/10734](http://i-base.info/qa/10734)



[fixhepc.com](http://fixhepc.com)

## Access to DAAs

Getting access to DAAs for everyone needs the NHS to negotiate much cheaper prices and the drug companies to agree to this.

Although HCV progresses slowly in many people, everyone should have the chance to be cured.

Get involved in improving access. Write to your MP and Hospital Trust. Join a community campaign.

Generic versions of these meds only cost less than \$500 to manufacture.


# More info

This leaflet is shortened from a much longer booklet on coinfection.

  [i-base.info/guides/hepC](http://i-base.info/guides/hepC)

The full booklet includes more information about transmission, diagnosis, treatment and support about living with HCV coinfection.

Information is all online or we can post you a free print copy.

  [i-base.info/order](http://i-base.info/order)

i-Base, 107 The Maltings, London, SE1 3LJ.

More pages >>>

**New HCV  
meds can  
cure nearly  
everyone...**

**They should  
be available  
to everyone  
with HCV.**