



Liver Disease & Hepatitis Program • 4315 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508 • Phone: 907-729-1560 Fax: 907-729-1570
Website: <http://www.anthctoday.org/community/hep/index.html>

We are glad to hear that you are interested in treatment for Hepatitis C!

Here are some things to think about (and do) before you make your final decision about treatment:

Why do treatment now? New medicines have increased the chance of cure and have fewer side effects.

Why would I wait? Within 1-2 years additional new medicines will be available. They will work even better, be given for shorter treatment time and have fewer side effects.

Some people have worse liver disease than others. If you have more severe liver disease (a lot of scarring in the liver or cirrhosis) you should consider getting treatment sooner. If you have a healthy liver you may be better off waiting for easier and more effective treatments.

What will happen during treatment?

- Genotype 1 treatment is oral sofosbuvir (once daily) and oral ribavirin (twice daily) and a weekly peginterferon shot for 12 weeks. This treatment also can be used to treat genotype 3 (see below).
- Genotype 2 treatment is sofosbuvir once daily and ribavirin twice a day for 12 weeks.
- Genotype 3 treatment is sofosbuvir once daily and ribavirin twice a day for 24 weeks. This treatment may be given to persons with genotype 1 who cannot take peginterferon.
- For persons with Genotype 1 who previously failed treatment and require treatment urgently, the treatment of sofosbuvir (once daily) and simeprevir (once daily) with or without ribavirin (twice daily) can be given for 12 weeks as an alternative treatment.

The treatments have side effects. You may feel tired, have headaches, nausea, trouble sleeping and lose your appetite. If your treatment includes peginterferon, you may have flu-like symptoms. There are more serious side effects that may show up in blood tests. You may have good days and bad days and find it harder to do activities you normally do.

PLEASE NOTE: None of the current treatments can be given to a pregnant or breastfeeding female or to a female who plans to become pregnant or a male who plans to father a child during treatment and for 6 months after treatment because this treatment can cause birth defects.

Are you ready for treatment?

There are several requirements for hepatitis C treatment. These are to make sure that you are going to be successful in completing treatment, and to protect your physical and mental health. The following items must be done before you can start treatment. We will review them together.

- You must be alcohol and drug-free for at least 6 months before we can start treatment.
- You need to discuss Hepatitis C treatment with your family medicine provider and get his or her “OK” to start treatment. You will have alternating appointments with Family Medicine and Liver Clinic during the course of treatment. Your family medicine provider can help you with non-liver related health problems during and after treatment.
- You should have a relative or close friend who is willing to help support you during treatment. The person you choose should come with you to the pre-treatment appointment.
- You need to be committed to making every treatment appointment and getting **FREQUENT** blood draws (every 1-4 weeks). We will follow you very closely during treatment.

Additional:

_____ If you have a history of depression or other mental health issues, you may need to be seen in Behavioral Medicine because some of the treatment medicines can cause depression, moodiness or other mental health problems. Contact your family medicine provider to schedule this.

_____ If your treatment includes peginterferon and you have high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes you will need to see an eye doctor (**ophthalmologist**, not optometrist) and get a retinal exam with your eyes dilated. This is because peginterferon shots can rarely cause permanent visual damage. Call 729-1450 for an appointment and be sure to tell them that you need your eyes examined before you start hepatitis C treatment.

_____ If you have cirrhosis you may need an EGD (when a doctor looks into your esophagus and stomach for swollen veins that can bleed). This requires sedation and is done in Day Surgery. Your liver clinic provider will make this referral if needed. Call Internal Medicine at 729-1500 to schedule the EGD after the referral is made.

_____ If you have cirrhosis, you need to have an ultrasound of the liver (done in the past 6 months). An ultrasound checks you for liver cancer. The nurses in Liver Clinic (729-1560) or Family Medicine (729-3300) can get you scheduled for this.

_____ Other: _____

_____ Other: _____

Congratulations on completing all the pre-treatment requirements!

Once everything you need to do on the list has been done, call Hannah Espera, RN, at 729-1599 to make an appointment to see one of our liver clinic providers. At this appointment we will discuss treatment and side effects in detail and decide together if you are ready to start treatment.

Please bring your support person with you to this appointment.