



Liver Disease & Hepatitis Program  
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Website: <http://www.anthctoday.org/community/hep/index.html>

We are glad to hear 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 may work even better, shorten treatment time, cost less, 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.

### **What will happen during treatment?**

There are 2 medication options for genotype 1:

- Option 1 is Harvoni® (ledipasvir/sofosbuvir), 1 tablet taken once a day by mouth. Treatment length is 12 weeks for most patients. 24 weeks of treatment is required for some persons with decompensated (significant) cirrhosis AND persons with cirrhosis who had previous treatment that failed. The major side effects (experienced in  $\geq 10\%$  of clinical trial subjects) include feeling tired and headache. In clinical studies, treatment response rates for Harvoni® were 94-100%.
- Option 2 is Viekira Pak® (ombitasvir, paritaprevir, and ritonavir tablets; dasabuvir tablets) co-packaged as 3 tablets in the morning and 1 tablet in the evening with food. Most treatments with Viekira Pak® also require ribavirin, which is 5-6 additional tablets divided between morning and evening with food. Treatment length is 12 to 24 weeks depending on genotype subtype and cirrhosis status. The major side effects include feeling tired, nausea, itching and skin rash, trouble sleeping and weakness. A common side effect of ribavirin is anemia. In clinical studies, treatment response rates for Viekira Pak® and Viekira Pak®/ribavirin were 86-100%.

Genotype 2 and 3 treatment is Sovaldi® (sofosbuvir), which is 1 tablet once a day and 5-6 ribavirin capsules divided between morning and evening with food. Treatment length is 12 weeks for genotype 2 and 24 weeks for genotype 3. The major side effects include feeling tired, headache, nausea, insomnia, weakness, itching, diarrhea, and irritability. A common side effect of ribavirin is anemia. In clinical studies, treatment response rates for Sovaldi®/ribavirin were 82-100% in genotype 2 and 60% -93% in genotype 3.

- Another Genotype 3 treatment option for those who can take peginterferon, is 12 weeks of Sovaldi® (sofosbuvir) plus ribavirin (6-7 pills/day), and a weekly peginterferon injection can be given. In addition to the side effects occurring with Sovaldi®/ribavirin treatment additional side effects include flu-like symptoms, depression and body aches, and side

effects that may show up only in blood tests. In a clinical study, this treatment resulted in a treatment response rate of 83%.

**PLEASE NOTE: No treatments containing ribavirin 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. There are no studies on ledipasvir or sofosbuvir (Harvoni® or Sovaldi®) in pregnant women or nursing mothers. Safety/risk during pregnancy or breastfeeding has not been established.**

## **Are you ready for treatment?**

There are several requirements for hepatitis C treatment. These requirements are to ensure 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 you can start treatment.
- You need to discuss hepatitis C treatment with your primary care provider and get his or her “OK” to start 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 want to follow you very closely during treatment.

### **Additional Requirements If Checked:**

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 as a Day Surgery procedure. Your primary care provider will make this referral if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_ If you have cirrhosis, you need to have an ultrasound of the liver (done in the past 6 months). This ultrasound checks your liver for cancer.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Once everything you need to do on the list has been done, call your primary care provider to make an appointment to plan for hepatitis C treatment. At this appointment, treatment and side effects will be discussed in detail.

**Please bring your support person with you to this appointment.**

Congratulations on completing all the pre-treatment requirements!