

## KEEP YOURSELF SAFE

### ALWAYS USE CONDOMS

- Using condoms for vaginal sex protects you from HIV, Hepatitis B and C and other sexually transmitted infections and prevents pregnancy.
- Using condoms for anal sex protects you from HIV, Hepatitis B and C and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Using condoms for oral sex protects you from HIV and sexually transmitted infections that can be caught orally.



### USE BACKUP CONTRACEPTION

#### If a condom bursts

- If you have not been using **backup contraception**, get emergency contraceptive within 72 hours. You can get it from a family planning service.
- If you know your partner(s) have an infection or they have any symptoms then go for a medical check up immediately, the doctor may provide preventive treatment.
- **Go for a sexual health check up two to seven days after the condom burst.**

### GOING FOR MEDICAL CHECK UPS

- Always follow a doctor's advice regarding the risk of infection.
- If you have had a burst condom always tell the doctor about any symptoms your partner had, the doctor may be able to offer you a preventive treatment.

### LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY

- If you have a discharge, other symptoms or have abdominal pain, go for a sexual health check up.
- Don't self prescribe; get a medical check up to ensure correct treatment.
- Always complete any course of treatment prescribed by a doctor, otherwise the infection may come back.
- Go for regular sexual health check ups or when you have a condom burst or unsafe sex.

# TAMPEP

European Network for HIV/STI  
Prevention and Health Promotion  
Among Migrant Sex Workers



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ENGLISH  
HEPATITIS



# TAMPEP



# WHAT IS VIRAL HEPATITIS



Hepatitis is caused by a virus that affects the liver causing inflammation. There are a number of different types of Hepatitis viruses - some strains are potentially fatal and can lead to liver failure.

Depending on the type of Hepatitis it can be 'benign' or can cause 'acute' or 'chronic' illness. A benign illness is one where no or few symptoms are experienced and the body recovers. An acute illness is one that gets better quickly, usually within weeks or, at the most, a few months.

A chronic illness is one that lasts a long time, possibly for the rest of your life. Sometimes symptoms come and go.

There are five most common types of hepatitis: A,B,C,D and E. However, types D + E are transmitted the same way as B + C. Therefore, we are only going to talk about Hepatitis A,B and C.

## HEPATITIS A

### Transmission

The Hepatitis A virus is transmitted through contaminated water and food or contact with faeces through poor hygiene or sexual contact. Hepatitis A occurs primarily in hot countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Middle East, Southern and Eastern Europe.

- A vaccine is available to prevent Hepatitis A

### Prevention

Avoid any direct contact with human faeces during sexual contact through using condoms for anal sex and avoid oral contact with faeces without protection.

Good personal and food hygiene and washing your hands regularly reduces the risk of infection. During trips to hot countries and those with low hygienic standards avoid raw foods, undercooked shellfish and drink only bottled water.

### Symptoms & Treatment

Symptoms appear between 2 – 6 weeks after infection. Some people may only have a mild illness. They may not know they are infected,

although they can pass on the virus to others. A few people develop a serious illness and need to be looked after in hospital. The general symptoms - often mistakenly diagnosed as flu - such as tiredness, aches and pains, a fever and/or loss of appetite. There may also be nausea (feeling sick), vomiting, stomach ache and/or diarrhoea. These symptoms may last for a week or more. Then jaundice may develop. Jaundice is easily noticeable because the whites of the eyes go yellow, and in more serious cases the skin goes yellow, urine may turn dark and bowel motions become pale. If jaundice appears, you should immediately go to a doctor.

As with most illnesses caused by viruses, there is no specific treatment although there is medication to alleviate the symptoms. Many people feel tired and need more rest than usual. Generally, people are encouraged to eat and drink as well as they are able. Light food may be easier to digest. Alcohol is strictly forbidden!

## HEPATITIS B

### Transmission

Hepatitis B is transmitted through contact with body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal fluids, saliva, faeces including sharing tooth brushes. Most infections in Europe occur during sexual contact, particularly anal sex, and sharing injecting equipment. It can also be transmitted during tattooing and body piercing if equipment is not sterilised properly and through unscreened blood products and from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth.

- A vaccine is available to prevent Hepatitis B.

### Prevention

- Avoid sharing injecting equipment.
- Avoid any direct contact with human faeces and body fluids during sexual contact through using condoms for anal and vaginal sex and dental dams for rimming.
- If getting tattoos or body piercing ALWAYS make sure the equipment is single use only or has been properly sterilised.

### Symptoms & Treatment

Symptoms appear between 1 to 6 months after infection. The general symptoms are the same as Hepatitis A and they can be very severe although this is rare. Hepatitis B can cause an acute or a chronic illness.

Most people with acute Hepatitis B do not need treatment, as they do not develop long-term liver damage. They may feel more tired than usual and need plenty of rest, but they eventually recover.

People with chronic Hepatitis B may benefit from treatment. They need to be regularly (at least every six months) seen by a specialist in liver diseases or a specialist in digestive diseases to check whether they have liver damage and whether treatment is necessary.

If treatment is needed, antiviral medications and immunomodulators (interferon) are used. The aim is to prevent the virus from growing and causing more liver damage. Not everyone responds well to antiviral treatment. Some people respond well to start with, but get worse again as soon as treatment stops.

## HEPATITIS C

### Transmission

Hepatitis C is transmitted through infected blood and other body fluids. Most infections occur as a result of blood contact, particularly sharing injecting equipment. It can also be transmitted during tattooing and body piercing if equipment is not sterilised properly and from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth. Transmission through sexual contact is thought to be rare, but not unknown.

- There is NO vaccine against Hepatitis C.

### Prevention

- Avoid sharing injecting equipment.
- If getting tattoos or body piercing ALWAYS make sure the equipment is single use only or has been properly sterilised.
- When dealing with blood spillages ALWAYS use protective gloves and clean up with bleach.
- Always use condoms for vaginal and anal sex.

### Symptoms

Hepatitis C is usually a chronic condition, but many people have no symptoms and are often unaware they have the virus. Symptoms, when present, can be vague. Some people experience extreme tiredness and feel 'unwell' similar to Hepatitis B symptoms. Symptoms may come and go. The liver is a very uncomplaining organ and most people do not know that it is not working properly until advanced disease has developed. Approximately 20% of infected people get better without treatment. The rest remain infected, which means in these people the liver stays inflamed. Some will have mild inflammation only, which may never develop further. In others the inflammation damages the liver and leads to cirrhosis or cancer some 20 or even 30 years after being infected.

### Treatment

Currently, Hepatitis C can be treated with antiviral treatments, which is effective in majority of people. Not everyone is considered suitable for treatment. Some people need only regular assessment to detect if damage to their liver is occurring or progressing. Factors such as age, gender, strain of Hepatitis C, duration of infection, degree of liver damage, co-infection with HIV and whether cirrhosis has already developed, are important in deciding if treatment is likely to be effective.