

# Blood to Blood **HEPATITIS C**



[www.nyhealth.gov/bloodtoblood](http://www.nyhealth.gov/bloodtoblood)



State of New York  
Department of Health

**Drug Use - Tattoos - Body Piercing**



# Hepatitis

## Hepatitis

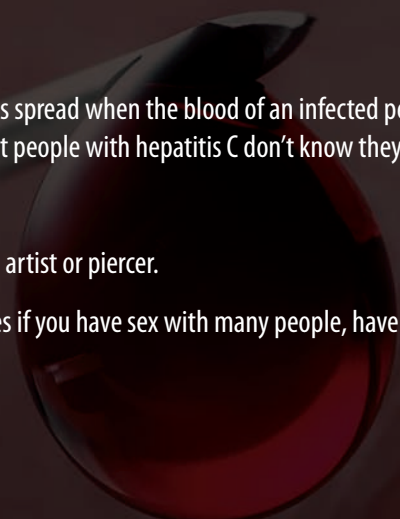
“Hepatitis” means swelling of the liver. The liver is an important organ. It breaks down everything you eat, drink, breathe in, inject or take in through your skin. You can’t live without your liver. Hepatitis is most often caused by a virus. In the United States, the most common types of hepatitis are hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

## Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus. It is spread when the blood of an infected person comes in contact with the blood of a person not infected. Most people with hepatitis C don’t know they have it. You are at risk for hepatitis C if you:

- Inject drugs, even once
- Get a tattoo or body piercing from an unlicensed tattoo artist or piercer.

The risk of getting hepatitis C from sex is low. The risk increases if you have sex with many people, have a sexually transmitted disease (STD), have rough sex or if you have HIV.



# Drug Use

## Drug Use

Most people who have hepatitis C got infected by injecting drugs. Hepatitis C can be spread by sharing needles or anything else with blood in or on it (e.g., spoons, bottle caps, cotton, ties, water).

## If You Use Drugs, Here's What You Need to Know

The best choice is to stop using. If you are going to inject drugs, do it as safely as you can:

- Use a new needle and syringe every time.
- Don't share needles or anything else with blood in or on it.
- Clean the injection site with soapy water, alcohol swabs or rubbing alcohol before you inject.
- If you don't have a new syringe and needle, and you must inject drugs before you can get clean ones, clean the syringe and needle with bleach to reduce your risk.

# TATTOO Ink

## Ink

**If you decide to get a tattoo, make sure your tattoo is done safely.**

Find out if the artist --

- Has a license for tattooing
- Uses ONLY sterile needles and ink pots
- Sterilizes all equipment that comes in contact with your blood
- Wears gloves and washes their hands before working with you
- Cleans and disinfects all surfaces (countertops, floors, etc.)
- Provides written information on how to care for the tattoo

You must be completely sober when you get a tattoo or you will be turned away.





# Piercing

## Piercing

If you decide to get a piercing, find out if the piercer - -

- Has a license for piercing
- Uses ONLY sterile needles, tools and jewelry
- Sterilizes all equipment that comes in contact with your blood
- Wears gloves and washes their hands before working with you
- Cleans and disinfects all surfaces (countertops, floors, etc.)
- Provides written information on how to care for the piercing

You must be completely sober when you get a piercing or you will be turned away.

# Info

## Info

To find out more information about hepatitis C or to find a syringe exchange program or a drugstore that sells syringes without a prescription, call 1-800-522-5006 or visit [www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov)

To find help for drug use, alcoholism or problem gambling, call 1-877-8-HOPENY or 1-877-846-7369

For more information about safe tattooing, call the Alliance of Professional Tattooists at 1-816-979-1300 or visit [www.safe-tattoos.com](http://www.safe-tattoos.com)

For more information about safe body piercing, call the Association of Professional Piercers at 1-888-888-1APP or visit [www.safepiercing.org](http://www.safepiercing.org)

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