



## Protecting Children from Hepatitis C: What You Need to Know

**Hepatitis C** is a virus that affects the liver and can lead to serious health problems if left untreated. While it often causes no symptoms in children, early detection and treatment can prevent long-term damage.

### How to Prevent Transmission

- **Avoid contact with blood:** Never share needles, razors, or toothbrushes that may have blood on them.
- **Screen pregnant women:** Mothers with hepatitis C can pass the virus to their babies. Testing during pregnancy is advised.
- **Use sterile medical equipment:** Ensure all injections, transfusions, and dental procedures are done safely.
- **Educate teens:** Raise awareness about the risks of injection drug use, unsafe tattoos, and piercings.

### How to Check for Infection

- Children at risk—especially those born to infected mothers or who had certain medical procedures—should be tested.
- **Step 1:** A simple **blood test for hepatitis C antibodies**.
- **Step 2:** If positive, an **HCV RNA test** confirms if the infection is active.

### How to Treat

- Hepatitis C is now **curable** with safe, effective oral medications called **direct-acting antivirals (DAAs)**.
- In most cases, **treatment lasts 8–12 weeks** and has minimal side effects.
- Children as young as **3 years old** can be treated under medical supervision.
- Early treatment prevents liver damage and ensures a healthy future.

**Early detection saves lives. Testing and treatment are now simpler and more effective than ever.**