

# Helping You Feel Your Best!

## Nutrition Tips for People with Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C harms your liver. Your liver plays many important roles. It deals with everything you eat and drink. A healthy lifestyle can help you feel your best and help your body cope with the hepatitis C virus.

Healthy eating and moderate physical activity can:

- give your body the energy it needs to work well,
- boost your immune system,
- help your liver renew itself, and
- decrease some of the symptoms of your hepatitis C and the side effects of treatment, such as feeling tired and sick.

### Eat well

- Choose a variety of foods from all four food groups of Canada's Food Guide.
- Get plenty of Vegetables & Fruit and Grain Products.
- Eat at least 2 servings from the Meat & Alternatives food group (such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs, peanut butter, and cooked legumes (e.g. dried beans, peas and lentils)).
- Focus on lower fat choices within each food group.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids every day.
- Keep your energy level up by eating smaller meals and snacks more often.

### Supplement carefully

- Use only herbal products that your health care provider has told you are safe.

- Do not take more than one multivitamin per day – and you may need one without iron. Talk to your health care provider about which vitamin and mineral supplements are best for you.

### Take care

- Avoid alcohol.
- Enjoy light to moderate physical activity, such as walking, swimming, gardening and stretching.
- Build up slowly to 30 to 60 minutes of activity, at least 4 times a week.
- Avoid food poisoning by storing and preparing foods safely. Wash your hands often.
- Talk to your health care provider if depression affects your ability to eat well.

### If you have complications...

...such as cirrhosis or fluid retention, you need to pay even more attention to nutrition.

- Get tailored advice from your doctor or dietitian.
- Eat smaller meals every few hours. This may be easier for your body to handle and will help keep your energy level up.
- You may need to limit your intake of salt if you have swelling of the abdomen (ascites) or legs (edema).
- Try extra-strength liquid nutrition supplements, available from your local pharmacy. Some examples are: Boost Plus Calories®, Ensure Plus®, Resource Plus®.

### Low-Cost Nutritious Choices

Eating well doesn't have to be expensive. Low-cost nutritious choices can be found in each food group:

- bread, rice, pasta, rolled oats
- carrots, potatoes, frozen vegetables, apples, in-season berries
- milk powder, plain milk or yogurt
- baked beans, eggs, dried beans, peas and lentils, canned fish, ground beef

Brought to you by:



For more tips, see Appendices G and H of the full Guidelines at [www.dietitians.ca/resources/HepC\\_Guidelines\\_March2003.pdf](http://www.dietitians.ca/resources/HepC_Guidelines_March2003.pdf)

## Some Useful On-line Resources



Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide  
[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)

Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living  
[www.paguide.com](http://www.paguide.com)

Dietitians of Canada: Eat Well, Live Well section  
Includes many consumer tools such as ETracker, Let's Make a Meal!,  
Recipe Analyzer and many fact sheets and FAQs  
[www.dietitians.ca/eatwell](http://www.dietitians.ca/eatwell)

Food Safety information and materials  
[www.canfightbac.org](http://www.canfightbac.org)

Nutrition labelling education materials  
[www.healthcanada.ca/nutritionlabelling](http://www.healthcanada.ca/nutritionlabelling)

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine  
[www.nccam.nih.gov/health/hepatitisc/index.htm](http://www.nccam.nih.gov/health/hepatitisc/index.htm)

Heppo Recipe Exchange  
Recipes submitted by other people infected with the hepatitis C  
virus; not specifically "HepC healthy" unless noted.  
[www.hepcnet.net/recipes/recipeindex.html](http://www.hepcnet.net/recipes/recipeindex.html)

Hepatitis C and Food  
Hepatitis C Council of New South Wales, February 2002  
[www.hepatitisc.org.au/other\\_resources/food\\_brochure.htm](http://www.hepatitisc.org.au/other_resources/food_brochure.htm)

Health Canada hepatitis C information  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dc-ma/hep/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dc-ma/hep/index-eng.php)

Public Health Agency of Canada hepatitis C information  
[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hepc/index\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hepc/index_e.html)

### Other Resources

Consult the organizations listed across the bottom of this handout.

## How to Find a Registered Dietitian

- Visit [www.dietitians.ca/find](http://www.dietitians.ca/find).
- Call your local public health department, hospital or community health centre.
- Call the Consulting Dietitians Network at 1-888-901-7776.

Registered Dietitians can help you meet your nutrition needs by designing a personal meal plan.

## You definitely should see a Registered Dietitian if you have:

- complications related to advanced liver disease, such as cirrhosis or fluid retention
- another medical condition, such as diabetes or HIV
- a problem with weight loss or weight gain
- diarrhea for more than 3 days
- trouble eating well
- diagnosis of fluid retention requiring a low salt diet

This handout is based on *Hepatitis C: Nutrition Care – Canadian Guidelines for Health Care Providers*, 2003.

[www.dietitians.ca/resources/HepC\\_Guidelines\\_March2003.pdf](http://www.dietitians.ca/resources/HepC_Guidelines_March2003.pdf)

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hepc/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hepc/index-eng.php)

Another handout in this series is available, *Dealing with Discomforts: Nutrition Tips for People with Hepatitis C*.

This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your doctor or consultation with a Registered Dietitian.

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Hepatitis Outreach Society

902-420-1767

1-800-521-0572

[www.HepatitisOutreach.com](http://www.HepatitisOutreach.com)

Également disponible en français

Canadian Association for  
the Study of the Liver  
[www.hepatology.ca](http://www.hepatology.ca)

Canadian Association  
of Hepatology Nurses  
[www.livernurses.org](http://www.livernurses.org)

Canadian Hemophilia Society  
[www.hemophilia.ca](http://www.hemophilia.ca)  
1-800-668-2686

Canadian Liver Foundation  
[www.liver.ca](http://www.liver.ca)  
1-800-563-5483

Hepatitis C Society of Canada  
[www.hepatitiscsociety.com](http://www.hepatitiscsociety.com)  
1-800-652-HepC (4372)