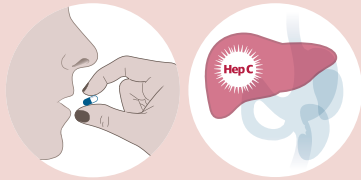


There are pros and cons to taking treatment for hepatitis C now or leaving it till later.

Reasons to delay treatment till later:

Hepatitis C treatment **doesn't always work**.



New, better drugs will be available in the next few years.



Side effects, such as feeling tired, unwell and moody, can be severe, but they vary from person to person.

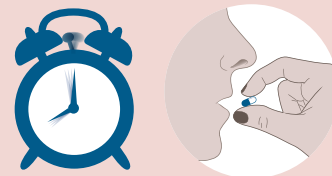


You may want to delay treatment:

If you have **other priorities** at the moment, such as work or relationships.



If you would find it hard to **take all the doses** of the drugs at the right times.



If you or your partner **are pregnant or could become pregnant** during treatment..

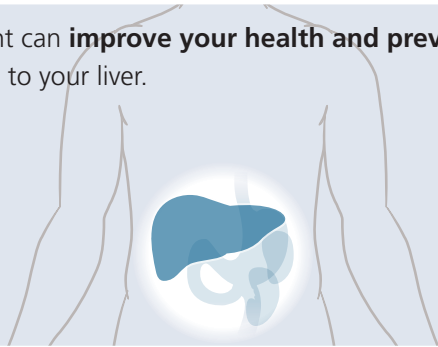


If you have a **strain** of hepatitis C (genotypes 1 or 4) that is harder to treat with current drugs.

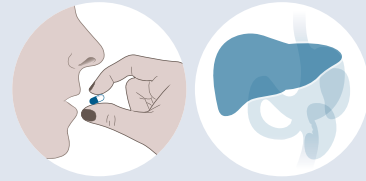


Reasons to take treatment now:

Treatment can **improve your health and prevent damage** to your liver.



Successful treatment will **cure you of hepatitis C**.



After successful treatment, there will be no risk of **passing hepatitis C** on to someone else.



Treatment isn't for ever – usually **6, 12 or 18 months**.



It may be best to take treatment now:

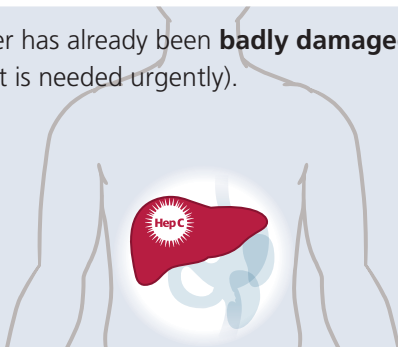
If you were infected in **the last six months**, in which case treatment has more chance of success.



If you have a **strain** of hepatitis C (genotypes 2 or 3) that is easier to cure.



If your liver has already been **badly damaged** (treatment is needed urgently).



Notes:

You can take medication for hepatitis C and HIV at the same time, but it's best **not to start** both treatments at the same time.

If your liver is more damaged than your immune system: Start hepatitis C treatment first. Take HIV treatment later.

If your immune system is more damaged than your liver: Start HIV treatment first. Add hepatitis C treatment later.

If you are already stable on HIV treatment: Continue with your HIV treatment and start hepatitis C treatment if necessary.

Some HIV drugs aren't suitable for people taking drugs for hepatitis C, but alternatives are available.

Pregnancy: the drug ribavirin can harm an unborn baby. If you or your partner has taken ribavirin in the last six months, you must use contraception to avoid pregnancy.

Important points:

- Deciding on the best time to take treatment for hepatitis C is not straightforward.
- It's important to get support and advice to help you with this decision.