

Becoming a healthier you

A guide to caring for your liver



Model

If you have chronic hep C or are cured*
of the infection

Living healthy is important



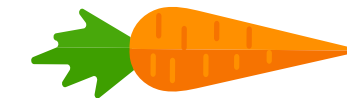
*Cure means that the hep C virus cannot be detected in your blood 3 months after completing treatment.

Create your plan for success

This brochure can help guide you to making healthier choices if you are living with chronic hepatitis C (hep C) or if you are cured* of the infection.

Taking care of yourself isn't just about the treatment. Eating and drinking healthy are essential for living a healthy lifestyle too. So is staying active on a regular basis, even if you're just walking to the store or mailbox.

Let's get started!



Feeling fatigued?

When you're living with hep C, it's quite possible you could feel fatigued. It could be due to your hep C, or it may be due to another health condition that you also have, such as chronic kidney disease (CKD) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Fatigue could also be related to anything from stress to lack of sleep, diet, or other lifestyle issues. Here are some tips for managing 2 major causes of fatigue:

How to manage your stress

- Learn how to manage your time
- Keep a diary of what triggers your stressful moments
- Talk it out with friends and family
- Make more "me time" to socialize or relax
- Volunteer: Help others who are less fortunate

How to get more sleep

- Take the TV out of the bedroom
- Listen to some relaxing music
- Learn a calming exercise such as yoga
- Read a book
- Take a warm bath

If you have hep C, you may not feel any symptoms at all. That's why it's important to speak with your health care provider about your hep C and how you are feeling.

A photograph of a person lying down in a small boat on a body of water. The person is wearing blue and white striped pants and is barefoot. The boat is white with a dark wooden trim. The water is calm and blue. The background is slightly blurred, showing a shoreline with trees. The text "Just relax" is overlaid in large white letters on the right side of the image.

Just relax



Stand up for yourself

Models

Move more. More often.

If you have hep C, you have an increased risk for other diseases such as type 2 diabetes and fatty liver disease. But there are things you can do that may help prevent these and other health problems—most importantly, keeping your weight down. One of the best ways to do that, while also generally improving how you feel, is to make physical activity a part of your daily routine.

Regular physical activity and exercise have been shown to offer many health benefits. And you don't have to be an athlete to enjoy them. Being active works your muscles, heart, and lungs, can help you feel better, and may reduce the risk of some diseases.



Some tips to get started:

- Step off the bus a stop earlier than usual and walk the rest of the way
- Stand up at work and walk at a normal pace for 2 to 5 minutes each hour
- Choose to park farther away from the grocery store
- Brisk walking and housework can make a difference

Talk to your health care provider about what's possible for you. Then figure out which activities you really like—and get going!

Water helps keep your body running smoothly

Water is good for many things, and can help flush toxins from your body

With hep C, your body already has a hard time flushing out toxins. That's why it's so important to stay hydrated, because dehydration will make it even harder to flush out toxins.

How to stay fully hydrated



✓ **Drink plenty of fluids: 6 to 8 glasses every day.**
Go for drinks that are alcohol free. Some healthier choices are water and low-fat milk. Ask your health care providers how much fluid is right for you.

✓ **Eat foods that are high in water content.**
Some options are broccoli, cucumbers, watermelon, and tomatoes.

✗ **Avoid sugary drinks and carbonated soda.**
These are high in added sugars and calories.

✗ **Limit your intake of unsweetened fruit juice and smoothies.**
Since they are high in sugar content, have one 150-mL glass.

What about alcohol?

If you have hep C, drinking alcohol increases your risk of worsening liver damage even more. Talk to your health care provider about whether it's okay for you to drink alcohol. Even a small amount of alcohol may damage your liver and cause scarring.

[Open here to see recipes for some delicious non-alcoholic drinks that can be used for any social occasion to help you stay on track.](#)



Simply add water



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STRAWBERRY BASIL LEMONADE



Ingredients:

- 250 mL lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- 7 strawberries, whole
- 10 basil leaves
- 75 mL honey or agave syrup + more to taste
- 7 strawberries, sliced
- 700 mL ice + more
- 1 to 1 & ½ L water, flat or sparkling
- 5 basil blossoms for garnish, optional

Directions:

In the bowl of a small food processor or blender, add the lemon juice, 7 whole strawberries, and 5 basil leaves. Blend until smooth. Transfer the strawberry puree to a pitcher and stir in the honey or agave. Add the filtered or sparkling water and stir to combine. Adjust taste with more honey if you like. Add the sliced strawberries and the remaining basil leaves and refrigerate until ready to serve over a lot of ice. Garnish with some tiny basil leaves and the basil blossoms, if available.

Makes 4 servings

MINT CUCUMBER AND LIME



Ingredients:

- 500 g cucumbers (about 2 good sized cucumbers), ends trimmed, but peel still on, coarsely chopped
- 125 mL lime juice from fresh limes (from about 500 g limes, or 5 to 10 limes, depending on how juicy they are)
- 30 g packed (spearmint) mint leaves (about a large handful), woody stems removed
- 100 g sugar
- Approximately 300 mL of water (to fill ¾ of blender)

Directions:

Put all of the ingredients in a blender and add enough water to fill ¾ of the blender. Hold the lid on the blender and purée until smooth. Place a fine mesh sieve over a bowl and pour the purée through it, pressing against the sieve with a rubber spatula or the back of a spoon to extract as much liquid as possible. Fill a large pitcher halfway with ice cubes. Add the liquid mixture. Serve with sprigs of mint and slices of lime.

Makes 4 servings

CHAI ICED TEA



Ingredients:

- 5-cm piece fresh ginger, cut into thin rounds
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 6 g black peppercorns
- 10 whole cloves
- 6 cardamom pods
- 1 & ½ L cold water
- 6 bags of black tea (preferably Darjeeling)
- 475 mL whole milk
- 100 g (packed) golden brown sugar

Directions:

Combine the first 5 ingredients in a medium saucepan. Using a mallet or the back of a large spoon, lightly crush or bruise the spices in the saucepan. Add 1 & ½ L water to the spices; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, partially cover the pan, and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Add tea bags to pan and steep for 5 minutes. Discard tea bags. Add milk and sugar. Bring tea to a simmer over high heat, whisk until sugar dissolves, then strain chai into a teapot.

Makes 4 servings

VIRGIN LIME AND SELTZER WATER



Ingredients:

- Seltzer water
- 4 lime slices

Directions:

Put ice into a large glass tumbler. Pour seltzer water in the tumbler. Twist lime slice, rub it on tumbler rim, and drop it into the tumbler.

Makes 4 servings

For more great recipes visit
[Understandinghepc.com](https://www.understandinghepc.com)

Make eating healthy happen

Changing your eating habits takes willpower, but it is worth it. If you have hep C, you can help reduce the risk for developing diabetes, fatty liver disease, and other health conditions by eating as healthy as possible. By eating healthy, you can also help control your weight, reduce blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and generally improve how you feel. Plus, many healthy foods are naturally delicious! Who wouldn't feel better?

What a healthy diet looks like:



Fruits and vegetables

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables (at least 400 grams daily), legumes (such as lentils, beans), nuts, and whole grains (for example, unprocessed maize, millet, oats, wheat, or brown rice)



Fish and other healthy fats

Stick with fish, avocados, nuts, and vegetable oils (unsaturated fats) instead of red meats, cheese, and processed foods (saturated and trans fats).



Low salt

Cut salt to less than 5 grams per day



Reduce sugar

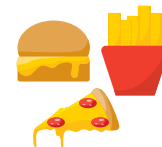
Reduce daily sugar intake to about 50 grams



Replace snacks and drinks full of extra sugar

Choose fruits or vegetables instead of snacks and drinks full of extra sugar (such as candy and soda)

Terms to know:



Processed foods

A processed food is one that has been changed from its original form. During this change, salt, sugar, and fat are often added. Some examples of processed foods are: cereals, microwavable meals, canned foods, frozen dinners, and bread.



Saturated fats

Saturated fats can give you high cholesterol, which can lead to a greater risk for heart disease and stroke. Some examples of saturated fats are: hard cheese, cakes and pastries, fatty meats and sausages, and ice cream.



Unsaturated fats

Unsaturated fats can help lower your cholesterol. Trading in your saturated for unsaturated fats may actually reduce your risk of heart disease. Some examples of foods that are high in unsaturated fats are: mackerel, herring, tuna, olive oil, almonds, and avocados.



Trans fats

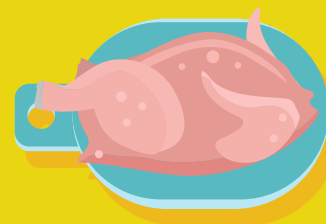
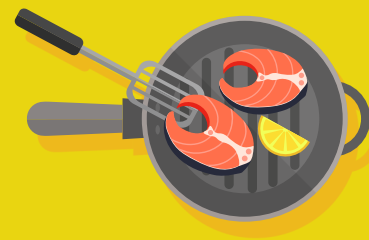
Trans fats are fats that go through a chemical process that makes the oil solid or hard. This is also known as hydrogenated fat. This type of fat is often found in processed foods and prepackaged snack foods such as frozen pizza, snack chips, and deep-fried food like donuts or french fries. By avoiding trans fats, you may decrease your chance of getting heart disease.

Eat lean

If you have hep C, you are at higher risk for diabetes and fatty liver disease. Eating leaner may help you decrease those risks.

- Lower saturated fats to less than 10% of your daily diet
- Reduce trans fats to less than 1% of your daily diet
- Replace saturated and trans fats with unsaturated fat

Reducing your total fat intake to less than 30% of your daily diet also helps prevent unhealthy weight gain.



Eat smart

Change how you cook

- Remove the fatty part of meat
- Use unsaturated vegetable oils (such as olive, soy, sunflower, and corn oil) instead of animal fats or oils high in saturated fats (such as butter, ghee, lard, coconut oil, and palm oil)
- Boiling, steaming, and baking are healthier options than frying

Use white meat (such as poultry) and fish

- White meat and fish are generally low in saturated fats, unlike red meat

Cut your intake of foods that are high in saturated fats

- Examples include cheese and ice cream
- Choose low-fat or reduced-fat versions of milk and dairy products

Eat only small amounts of processed meats

- These are high in trans fat and salt

Avoid processed and fried foods

- These types of foods contain unhealthy trans fats

Nutrition labels can tell you a lot

Learning how to read nutritional labels can be very helpful. It can help you decide which products to choose and keep track of foods you're eating that are high in calories, fat, salt, and added sugars.

Nutrition labels:

- Are most often located on the side or the back panel of the package
- Include information about energy in the form of calories
- Include information about fat, saturated fats, carbohydrates, sugars, protein, and salt
- Provide nutritional information such as suggested serving size

What to look for

When it comes to your diet, you'll want to talk to your health care provider about your personal goals. Here is some general information to help you as you read nutrition labels.

What to look for

TOTAL FAT

TOO HIGH: more than 17.5 g of fat per 100 g

HEALTHIER: 3 g of fat or less per 100 g

SATURATED FAT

TOO HIGH: more than 5 g of saturated fat per 100 g

HEALTHIER: 1.5 g of saturated fat or less per 100 g

SUGAR

TOO HIGH: more than 22.5 g of total sugar per 100 g

HEALTHIER: 5 g of total sugar or less per 100 g

SALT

TOO HIGH: more than 1.5 g of salt per 100 g (or 0.6 g sodium)

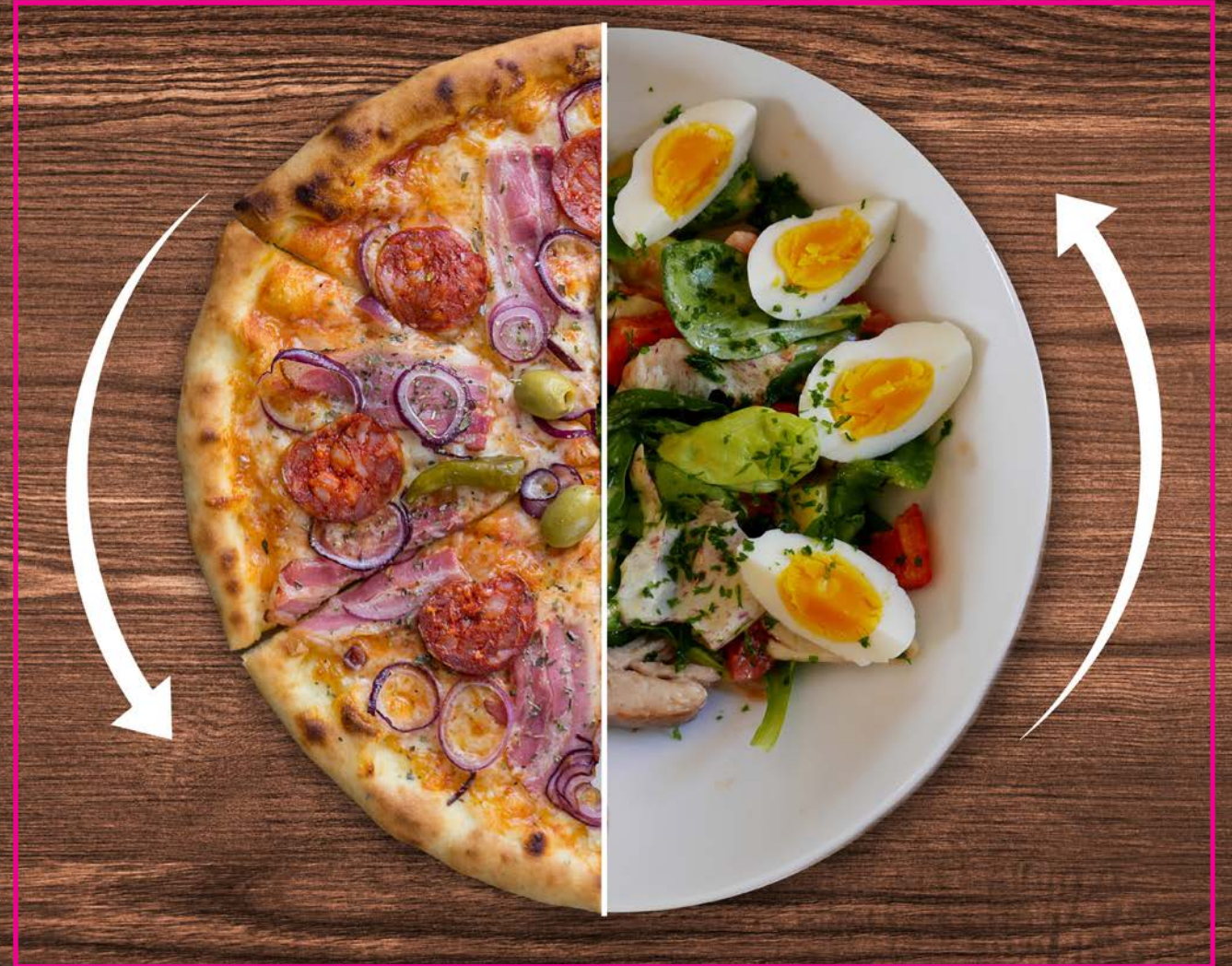
HEALTHIER: 0.3 g of salt or less per 100 g (or 0.1 g sodium)

Food swapping: Always in good taste

If you have hep C, you might think you can't enjoy delicious foods. But by swapping out some of the unhealthy choices and swapping in healthier options, you can have filling and great-tasting meals.

Try these small changes when you have your next meal or drink, or when you open the kitchen cupboard or fridge looking for a snack. This is just a start—we're sure you'll have your own ideas about how to make food swaps fun and delicious.

Check out some delicious food swaps inside



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Breakfast

SWAP OUT	SWAP IN
Sugary cereals	Cereals made of whole grains such as porridge or shredded wheat—and no added sugar
Sprinkling sugar on your cereal	Top it all off with fresh or dried fruit
Full-fat Greek yogurt	Lower-fat or fat-free Greek yogurt or European low-fat yogurt
Streaky bacon	Try lean bacon instead

Lunch

SWAP OUT	SWAP IN
White breads, bagels, and muffins	Choose breads, bagels, and muffins made from whole grains
Butter and cheese on your baked potato	Reduced-fat spread and reduced-salt and -sugar baked beans
A tuna melt	Tuna salad on whole wheat bread without mayo
Cheddar cheese slices for your sandwich	Reduced-fat hard cheese

Dinner

SWAP OUT	SWAP IN
Creamy or cheesy sauces	Tomato- or vegetable-based sauces
Mashed potatoes made with butter and whole milk	Make your potatoes with a low-fat spread and lower-fat milk (such as semi-skimmed, 1% fat, or skimmed)
Fatty meats	Leaner cuts of meat (turkey, chicken, fish)

Snacks & Drinks

SWAP OUT	SWAP IN
Coffee with whole milk	"Skinny" coffee made with semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
Cola or carbonated soda	100% fruit juice (with no added sugar) mixed with soda water
Hot chocolate made with whole milk and whipped cream	Hot chocolate with skimmed milk and no cream
Blueberry muffin	A plain currant bun or one with a reduced-fat spread
Yogurt-coated raisins	Plain raisins



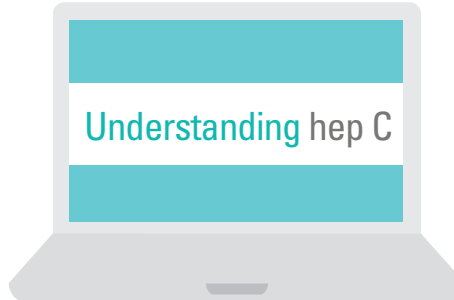
We hope you have found this guide useful in helping you reach your goal of a healthier lifestyle while living with hep C.

These healthy tips are also helpful if you have been cured of hep C and want to continue living healthy and taking care of your liver.

Cure of hep C means that the hep C virus cannot be detected in your blood 3 months after completing treatment. Please note that even if you are cured of hep C, your liver damage may not have disappeared.

Please speak with your health care provider about hep C, and before making any changes to your diet or daily physical routine.

For more information and resources on hep C, please visit [UnderstandinghepC.com](https://www.understandinghepc.com).



Find out more about hep C online

- Extra healthy tips
- Advice on talking about hep C
- Fun interactive quiz
- And more...





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