



A guide to...

New Hepatitis C treatment

Patient information

How to contact us

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email **westherts.pals@nhs.net**



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New treatment guidance

The medication/s you have been prescribed have been approved by National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) for the treatment of Hepatitis C and are fully licensed by the European Medicine Agency.

The side effects are mild and infrequent. The commonest are: dry skin, insomnia and low-grade nausea. If ribavirin is added to the regimen, some patients may experience a headache and/or develop anaemia. A few patients might also experience rash/itchy skin.

It is always important to make sure your doctor, GP, nurse and pharmacist are aware of any medicines you take to ensure that they are compatible with your prescribed Hepatitis C medication.

Hepatitis C medications can have interactions with the following:

- Prescribed medications
- Anaesthetic agents
- Over-the-counter medications
- Recreational drugs
- Muscle-building supplements
- Herbal medications

Your GP will be informed when you are commencing Hepatitis C treatment.

Your responsibility

You will be asked to take the medication as advised by your doctor / clinical nurse specialist (CNS).

You will be provided with a treatment guide to remind you how and when to take the medication. This will be given to you during your first treatment consultation.

Note: It is important that you take the medication as recommended. The treatment is expensive and funding is limited. Any missed/incorrect/lost doses cannot be replaced and your treatment may therefore be shortened and so less likely to succeed. A maximum of one month's medication can be issued at one time. If you need to travel with your medications, keep them in your hand luggage and in a secure place at your destination.

If you do not attend follow-up appointments and we cannot monitor your treatment safely, we may have to stop treatment. Funding for re-treatment is currently limited.

Monitoring

During your first clinic appointment, you will be advised when blood tests will next be required and when the next follow-up appointment will be. Once agreed, it is essential that you attend at this time to allow us to monitor your treatment safely.

You will also be advised when your medication will be delivered. Wherever possible, appointments will be booked in a timely manner to coincide with your blood tests and following delivery of medication.

Risks to reproduction, unborn babies and nursing infants

There may be unknown risks to you, your unborn baby or nursing infant if you are or become pregnant during the treatment, or if you are breastfeeding during the treatment. You must not be pregnant or breastfeeding, and you should not become pregnant or breastfeed while you are taking the Hepatitis C treatment and for **six months** after stopping treatment.

If you are male and in a relationship with a woman of child-bearing age you must agree to use at least barrier contraception during treatment. Ribavirin is known to cause **birth defects during treatment and six months thereafter** so contraception must be continued six months beyond treatment if taking Ribavirin as part of your therapy.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Hepatology CNS or Hepatology Consultant or Hepatology Service Administrator for advice (please leave a message if there is no reply).