



Hepatitis C

VA research on hepatitis C includes clinical trials of treatments, epidemiologic studies, investigations into the biological mechanisms of infection, and studies on improving quality of life for hepatitis C patients.

Examples of VA research advances

- **VA website on care, research**—Log on to VA's special website on hepatitis C (www.hepatitis.va.gov) and you'll find general information about the condition as well as an overview of VA's efforts in this area. Included are descriptions of four VA research sites with special hepatitis C programs: Minneapolis, San Francisco, Seattle/Portland, and West Haven.
- **HIV and hepatitis C**—In Houston, VA researchers examined the survival of African-American and white VA patients with HIV and found that both hospital deaths and two-year survival rates were similar between these two groups, in contrast to the disparities found in the general picture in the U.S. However, African-American veterans had more severe HIV disease and were more likely to also be diagnosed with hepatitis C.
- **Reducing side effects of interferon**—Scientists in Portland are exploring ways to reduce the mood disorders that often occur in hepatitis C patients who are treated with interferon. The research includes both laboratory and clinical studies.

Facts About Hepatitis C

The liver disease hepatitis C is caused by the hepatitis C virus. It is spread through contact with infected blood or contaminated IV needles, razors or tattoo tools. Hepatitis C is particularly prevalent among veterans, especially those who received blood transfusions prior to 1992. Most people with hepatitis C do not have any signs or symptoms of the disease for decades. By the time the disease is diagnosed, there can be significant damage to the liver, leading to complications including liver cancer and death. Treatments using the protein interferon can be effective.



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