

Support Systems

- **Difficulty adjusting** – You may resist the reality of your new life and it's possible limitations.
- **Hope** – Eventually will surface and begin to grow again.
- **Affirming reality** – Confronting the “new you” and reconstructing your life again based upon your life's experiences, your skills and your new limitations.

How do I deal with these feelings?

- **Go ahead feel what you feel**
It's OK to feel how you feel.
- **Recognize your feelings**
Don't deny what you're feeling. Try to identify what you really feel.
- **Get to know your triggers**
What situation or event sets you off?
- **Express your feelings and then let it go**
Holding in your feelings can do more damage than expressing how you feel to someone you trust and then letting it go.
- **Be as active as you can**
Try to keep active as it will take your mind off of your fears and worry.
- **Reward yourself**
Try giving yourself something pleasant to look forward to and set aside some time for yourself each day.

Support is available through family and friends. Talk to your doctor and if you need to, talk to a therapist. Ask about local support groups and make use of them. These people have been where you are and can give you many answers.

More information and assistance may be found through:

- Your health care provider
- Canadian Hemophilia Society:
1-800-668-2686 or www.hemophilia.ca
- Canadian Liver Foundation:
1-800-563-5483 or www.liver.ca
- Manitoba Hepatitis C Support Community Inc.:
779-6464 or info@mbhepc.org

Additional Information

This **Six Pamphlet Series**, along with the accompanying **Resource Directory**, is designed to provide you with a support network of resources within your community, a better understanding of Hepatitis C and how to prevent its spread, treatment options available and how to take control of your life through healthy lifestyle choices.

- **See** the Manitoba Hepatitis C Resource Directory for a glossary of terms and definitions and HCV resource contacts within the community.
- **Read** the entire **Six Pamphlet Series on Hepatitis C**: Hepatitis C - The Basic Facts, Hepatitis C and Your Liver, Hepatitis C - Infection and Prevention, Treatment Options for Hepatitis C, Healthy Living With Hepatitis C and Psychosocial Aspects of Hepatitis C.
- **Contact** the Manitoba Hepatitis C Support Community by telephone at: 779-6464, email: info@mbhepc.org or through our website: www.mbhepc.org

Hepatitis C

Psychosocial Aspects

Pamphlet # **6**
in a 6 Pamphlet Series
On Hepatitis C

Financial Implications

The Family

Your Emotions

Support Systems



Financial Implications

Symptoms of HCV and the side effects of treatment may affect your ability to work. Benefits are available from the following:



Canada Employment Assistance (EI)

You must have a minimum of 600 hours of insurable earnings in the past 52 weeks. If you provide medical proof of illness, you will be eligible for 15 weeks of benefits.

Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

You may qualify for benefits based upon the number of years you have contributed and submitting a detailed medical assessment to indicate your condition is severe and chronic.

Quebec Pension Plan (QPP)

The same as CPP.

Employment Income Assistance (Welfare)

Eligibility varies by Province and Territory, so you will have to check with your local office to see what benefits you qualify for.

Employer benefit packages

Check with your Personnel Department to see if you are covered. Insurance benefits will vary depending on the Company that handles your disability pension.

The Family

The impact on family can vary. There can be tension or friction as people react differently to change. Try to keep communication open and maintain family activities whenever possible. Counseling can help. Children are very perceptive and will pick up that something has changed. Pick a time that is right to talk to them. Reassure them and give them literature such as this pamphlet

series to read. Be patient as it may take time for your family to adjust.

Hepatitis C affects everyone differently, so through support groups and your doctor, you will discover the ways it affects you. Let the people around you know what you're feeling so they understand. This will make living with and treatment easier for all.

How You Can Support a Family Member with Hepatitis C

A good social network of friends and family that is supportive is crucial to reducing and moderating the effects of the stress on the HCV affected person's mental and physical health. Here are a few things one can do that will provide support to a friend or family member:

- Learn about HCV through reading, the internet or your health care professional.
- Avoid judging!
- Listen to the person before trying to take over. Let him/her express themselves and tell you what they want and how they feel.
- Expect moods and outlooks to vary.
- Reinforce hope and optimism.
- Don't neglect other relationships.
- Take care of yourself and find your own supports.



Your Emotions

You may feel as though you have lost your ability to cope with this radical (extreme) change in your physical and mental being and in your vision for the future. Although grieving is usually associated with death, people diagnosed with chronic illness such as HCV grieve too, due to their sense of loss. Here are some of the emotions that will likely touch your life as you come to terms with your illness.

- **Shock and denial** – You may choose to deny that you have the disease. Initially this may help you to cope with your sense of loss, but it will become a problem if you fail to confront and deal with the effects of the disease.
- **Emotional spells** – You may experience extreme sadness and tearful bouts due to your sense of loss.
- **Loneliness** – You may feel that your only option is to withdraw and isolate from others, as they don't understand what you are going through.
- **Illness** – Emotional stress can cause your body to break down and become ill.
- **Panic** – What will I do and how will I cope? This panic should pass.
- **Guilt** – With perhaps no ready explanation as to how you became infected, you may blame yourself and this will cause guilt.
- **Depression** – Isolating, sadness and feeling hurt are strong indicators.
- **Anger** – This could be caused by the unfairness of your loss, your health care provider or society in general.