

BTC/LM

**THE HAEMOPHILIA CENTRE
The Royal London Hospital
London E1 1BB
Director - Dr B T Colvin**

PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

You will have been told today or in the past that you have been in contact with the hepatitis C virus. This information sheet is provided for you to take from the clinic to help you remember some of the information which you will have been given by Dr Colvin or his team. We often find that patients do not remember everything they are told in the clinic. This is normal and should not worry you. We hope this sheet will help you to remember what has been said.

You carry a virus called hepatitis C in your liver. This is not the AIDS virus or related to it in any way. Dr Colvin will have explained that people treated with clotting factor concentrates (factor VIII and factor IX) from 1970 to 1985/86 will have contracted hepatitis C. In 1985/1986 concentrates were treated to kill or inactivate viruses and hepatitis C has not been transmitted by factor VIII or factor IX since then.

Dr Colvin will have explained to you that at least 50% of people with hepatitis C never develop any problems. If there are problems they may only happen after many years or decades. Therefore most people infected with hepatitis C virus can expect to stay well.

If you develop liver inflammation we may detect this in your blood tests which we check at every clinic visit. Although these help us to assess your liver, the only certain way of measuring liver damage is by liver biopsy. This means that a small piece of liver is removed with a needle and is looked at under the microscope. Even people without haemophilia may bleed following a liver biopsy and in people with haemophilia a liver biopsy is more dangerous than usual so that this will only be recommended under special circumstances.

Dr Colvin will have explained that there is no cure for hepatitis C. If the virus in your liver starts to cause inflammation there is a treatment called Interferon that can be given. The treatment helps 10-20% of patients who receive it but Dr Colvin has no certain way of knowing which individual patients will benefit. The decision to start treatment with Interferon (which must be injected) would only be taken after a full discussion with you.

Dr Colvin will have mentioned the low risk of sexual transmission of the virus to any partner. He will have reassured you that ordinary every day household contact will not transmit the virus so your family do not need to worry.

There is a great deal of research going on into hepatitis C infection and our advice may change as we learn more about your condition.

March 1995