

TREATMENT FOR CLIENTS WITH HIV/ HEPATITIS C CO-INFECTION

A community guide



Hepatitis C is a viral infection that causes liver inflammation, sometimes leading to serious liver damage. Individuals who are infected with both HIV and Hepatitis C can now receive treatment for both, and live long healthy lives. The messages below will help guide your clients to get the right care.



1 Encourage your client to get tested for hepatitis C virus (HCV)

- ✓ Even if you have tested negative for hepatitis C in the past, you may still be at risk of infection if you share needles, having unprotected sex, or have had unsterilized tattooing.
- ✓ Please come to a treatment facility to be tested.

2 Explain that if the client tests positive for HCV, their clinician will conduct a viral load test

- ✓ If you have been infected with HCV, your doctor will refer you to a provincial/central level facility for an HCV viral load test. The referral is required because this test is not available at district level facilities. The cost of the test will be covered by social health insurance.
- ✓ One you receive your hepatitis C viral load results, you will need to bring them to your doctor to determine if you have chronic hepatitis C, which will require treatment.

3 Offer guidance on how HCV can be treated

- ✓ If you are diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C, you will receive free treatment. Basic tests during your treatment will be covered by SHI as required.
- ✓ To avoid interactions between your hepatitis C and ARV medications, your doctor will either start you on TLD (a combination of drugs for HIV treatment), or change your regimen to TLD.

Current available free treatment includes the following:



Sofosbuvir 1 pill/day+Daclatasvir 1 pill/day, in the morning - before or after breakfast. Your doctor will prescribe for 12 or 24 weeks depending on your conditions.

This medication is contraindicated for those who are:

- Under 18 years of age
- Pregnant or breastfeeding
- On TB treatment with rifampicin, or on antiepileptic medication



4 Explain the importance of adherence and monitoring

- ✓ It is important to take your HCV medication as directed to ensure successful treatment.
- ✓ While on treatment, it is important to use an effective method for birth control because HCV medications can have a harmful effect on a developing fetus.
- ✓ To help avoid the possibility of re-infection, it is important to practice safe injection, protected sex using a condom when possible, and to avoid contaminated tattoo equipment.

You will need to conduct the following monitoring tests:



Hepatitis C viral load test: 12 weeks after HCV treatment completion to assess if the treatment is successful (98-100% of patients can effectively cure HCV infection)

Other possible tests according to your clinician such as a liver ultrasound, or other tests for liver function

