

protect yourself against



An information leaflet for gay and bisexual
men and men who have sex with men.



What is Hepatitis?

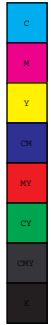
Hepatitis is a medical condition defined by inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis can occur with limited or no symptoms and can cause permanent liver damage. Some forms of Hepatitis stay with you for life. Hepatitis A and B can be passed on sexually, and gay men are particularly at risk. But there are safe and effective vaccines that can protect us from infection.

Getting vaccinated

Vaccination against Hepatitis A and B virus is available from GUM sexual health clinics. You need to have a series of injections (usually 3). This can happen over a 3 week period or over a 6 month period. A medical professional will discuss these options with you.

If you are HIV positive or don't know your status you should discuss this at the clinic because some Hep B vaccines may carry a risk for HIV positive men. The Hep B vaccine should protect you for a long time, but you will need a booster after four or five years, so remember to go back for a blood test. The Hep A vaccine should protect you for ten years.

Remember if you don't finish the full course of injections, it won't give you long term protection.



Hepatitis A

The Hep A virus is found in faeces/faecal matter. Hep A is usually transmitted through the fecal-oral route and you can come into contact with it through ingestion of contaminated food or water or through direct contact with an infected person such as through unprotected oral sex.

Hepatitis B

The Hep B virus is present in blood, semen, vaginal fluids and saliva. You can come into contact with Hep B through;

- Unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex.
- Sharing needles, blades, sex toys or toothbrushes
- Contact with small amounts of blood
- Exchange of saliva, deep kissing or bites

Start a course of vaccinations now and avoid the risk.
Vaccinations also available at Outreach Sauna clinics for more information visit www.rainbow-project.org



The Rainbow Project

For more information, support or advice please contact us:



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