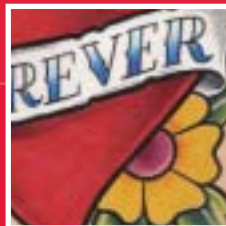


Hepatitis C + Body Art

Educators' kit for
secondary schools



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This resource has been developed by the Body Art Project and the Hepatitis C Council of Victoria.

The Body Art Project acknowledges the support and collaboration of the Victorian Secondary School Nurse Program, Department of Human Services Victoria. The Project also acknowledges the ongoing support provided by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, Latrobe University, Victoria.

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About this kit

Why a hepatitis C + body art educators' kit for school nurses?

This kit has been developed for two reasons. Firstly, it is a response to the hepatitis C epidemic. Young people have limited opportunities to learn about hep C at school because of its association with drug use, and yet hepatitis C infections among young people have risen dramatically in the last few years. Secondly, this kit is a response to the increasing number of young people showing an interest in body art, and the growing number of young people with body piercings and tattoos.

The aim of this kit is to equip secondary school nurses to teach young people about hep C, and enable them to make informed and healthy choices. Body art is an excellent vehicle for teaching young people about hepatitis C, skin penetration and blood awareness, as the topic easily captures young people's interest and attention. Also, importantly, body art provides an alternate means for teaching about hepatitis C, which doesn't emphasise illicit drug use.

The kit is divided into four sections:

Part one - educators' information

This section explores the context for addressing body art and hep C in schools. Educators will find information about body art and young people, some discussion of the need for creative hepatitis C education strategies, as well as a page of referrals and links.

Part two - classroom resources

This section contains a series of related classroom activities for middle secondary students that address hep C, blood awareness and body art. The program is designed to be delivered over two sessions. Educators have two options for the delivery of these sessions, depending on how much time is available.

Part three - Information sheets for young people

This information is designed as stand alone material. Ideally, this information should be displayed somewhere within reach of students, such as the counsellor or nurse's office, the health area or student bulletin board. All young people need to have access to information about the prevention of blood borne viruses (BBVs). It is important that young people can readily see this information on display, and have access to it without necessarily having to engage with teachers or other school staff. The fact sheets in this kit are provided as master copies, and are best copied double sided onto coloured paper. They can also be distributed to students on completion of the unit.

Part four - resources

This section contains a range of hep C and healthy body art resources, which may be useful for educators. Information on how to obtain further copies of these resources can be found in part one.

Hep C education in secondary schools

While most young people have a reasonable grasp of HIV transmission and prevention, relatively few have even a basic understanding of the different hepatitis viruses. There is limited information on hepatitis available in the school environment for students. There is also a lack of consensus on how best to educate young people about hepatitis.

Hepatitis C is perceived to be a virus that is difficult to address or locate in the curriculum. This is because hepatitis C is not classified as a sexually transmissible infection (STI). Another reason is that currently, the primary mode of hep C transmission is blood to blood contact arising from unsafe drug injecting practices, which is not routinely addressed in the current curriculum. As a result, there is a tendency for hep C to be omitted from classrooms, curriculum, and professional development in-services.

The purpose of this kit is to resolve some of these issues by using body art to facilitate understanding of the transmission and prevention of the hep C virus. It is relatively easy to provide young people with information on topics such as hep C. It is less easy to be sure that this information actually impacts on the behaviour of young people, or translates into safe practices that affect their health. Body art is an excellent platform for viewing and understanding skin penetration and blood awareness because it is interesting, appropriate and very relevant to young people.

Statistically speaking, schools can expect to have a small number of students with hepatitis C¹. Recent research indicates that not only are a significant proportion of young people in secondary schools sexually active, but also that a number are using drugs². We also know that new hep C infections are substantially on the rise among young people, and that one in five new infections are in people aged 15 to 19³. It is therefore essential that hep C education is integrated into the curriculum of every secondary school.

The national curriculum framework for STIs and Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs)⁴ highlights the importance of understanding the continuum of risk behaviours associated with young people. Government policies of harm minimisation take a realistic view of young people's lives and behaviours, in order to devise effective and appropriate responses to 'risk'. At a school based level this means thinking about ways of minimising potential harms for young people. Young people's behaviours can range from abstinence to various levels of sexual activity and drug use. This kit does not deal with complex issues of reducing the harm of drug use or sexual activity. Rather, it aims to reduce the harms associated with a range of practices by emphasising the importance of 'blood awareness', especially where penetration of the skin takes place.

What is a tattoo?

A tattoo is a skin artwork or decoration, where permanent ink is injected or otherwise pushed beneath the skin. There are many different meanings associated with tattoos, and a limitless number of tattoo designs or symbols. A tattoo can be placed on any skin surface.

What is a body piercing?

'Body piercing' is the process and practice of wearing jewellery that has been inserted into the skin. Ear piercing is just one type of body piercing. This skin is pierced using a purpose designed needle and taper. Popular or common sites for body piercings include ear, nose, eyebrow, lip, tongue and navel.

Young people and body art?

Body art is a powerful and increasingly common symbol of youth culture. A quick look at young people's clothing, music videos, bands, t-shirts and movies reveals the importance of tattooing and body piercing. Many popular music artists, celebrities and sporting heroes use body art to define their image. A look at advertising for clothes, cars, magazines and alcohol shows that many marketing campaigns are targeting a younger (under 30) audience by using images of tattoos and body jewellery as a strategy to grab attention and sell products. Body art is everywhere!

While less than 10% of secondary students actually wear body piercings (not including earrings), and even less have tattoos⁵, around two-thirds⁶ of young people express an interest in obtaining some form of body art in the future. Body piercing is, in some ways, a youth 'brand' in itself. Aside from ear piercing, many adults have little or no understanding of body piercing. It was virtually unheard of 20 years ago, but it has recently become quite popular and widespread among young people. Tattooing is also reaching a new 'market'. While tattooing has had a colourful history, it is no longer considered a practice of deviants, gangs, criminals, vagrants and wanderers. Recent Australian research found that 20% of 20 year olds have a tattoo⁷. For many younger people tattooing is a legitimate form of creative expression or body decoration, for some it is about individuality and autonomy, for others it's about fashion, acceptance and looking good.

To some young people body art is about body image, to others it is a symbolic mark with individual meaning. Some see it as a way of expressing control over their own bodies, a part of growing up.

There is a difference between the way young people think about tattoos and the way they think about piercing. Piercing is thought of as temporary, where jewellery can be added or removed as the mood takes, visible or hidden as the circumstances require. Tattoos on the other hand are well known to be permanent, and young people know that a decision to be tattooed is not to be made lightly. There will, however, always be young people for whom body art is a type of risk taking behaviour.

Tattooing and body piercing are by no means risk-free. Both involve penetration of the skin, and bleeding, thus creating an opportunity for the transmission of blood borne viruses. Young people, who are at a critical point in developing their identity and place in the world, need to fully understand the relationship between body art, blood, and the risk of contracting hepatitis C.

Young people have the right to be virus-free. For young people to make choices that promote and protect their health, it is crucial that they are well informed about the risks associated with body art, and the importance of safe, hygienic and professional body art practices. It is well within schools' duty of care to provide relevant and non-judgemental information to young people about issues that affect them, and how these potentially impact on their health.

Referrals/resources/links

Hepatitis C information and support

Hepatitis C Council of Victoria

Telephone: 03 9380 4644 or 1800 703 003
www.hepcvic.org.au

Hepatitis Line (telephone counselling)

Telephone: 1800 800 241 www.aidshep.org.au

Vietnamese Hep C Information Line

Telephone: 1800 456 007

Khmer Hep C Information Line

Telephone: 1800 810 277

Victorian Hep C Educator St Vincent's Hospital

Telephone: 03 9288 3586

Education + Resource Centre at the Alfred

Telephone: 03 9276 6993 www.accessinfo.org.au

Safe body art links

<http://www.bmezine.com/caba/cc95.html>

<http://www.co.boulder.co.us/health/pdf/Bodyartinfo.pdf>

<http://ronjones.org/Handouts/BodyArt.pdf>

<http://www.hepatitisc.asn.au/New3.htm>

and check out www.hepcvic.org.au for more info on body art

Hep C, BBV and STI testing

The Action Centre (youth health clinic)

Telephone: 03 9654 4766 or 1800 013 952
www.sexlife.net.au

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre (free testing)

Telephone: 03 9347 0244 or 1800 032 017
www.mshc.org.au

or contact your local community health centre.

Drug and alcohol information and referral

Directline (24 hour drug and alcohol counselling and information)

Telephone: 1800 888 236

YSAS (youth substance abuse service)

Telephone: 03 9418 1020 or 1800 014 446
www.ysas.org.au

VIVAIDS (Victorian drug user organisation)

Telephone: 03 9329 1501

Foot Patrol (clean injecting equipment and info on safer use) Telephone: 1800 700 102

Drug Info Telephone: 131 570

AIVL (info on safer drug use) www.aivl.org.au

Legal issues

Equal Opportunity Commission

Telephone: 03 9281 7111 www.eoc.vic.gov.au

Youthlaw (free legal advice and casework to people under 25)

Telephone: 03 9611 2412 www.youthlaw.asn.au

Crisis Support

Lifeline (suicide related)

Telephone: 131 114 or 1300 651 251

Care Ring Telephone: 131 169

Melbourne Youth Support Service

Telephone: 03 9614 3688
www.mcm.org.au/cyaf/myss

Curriculum resources

Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society, La Trobe University (Australian health research and curriculum material)

Telephone: 03 9285 5138 www.la.trobe.edu.au/www/arcshs

Blood Rules OK (blood awareness training pack)
www.sma.org.au/projects/blood_rules.asp

National Hepatitis C Resource Manual can be ordered from phd.publications@health.gov.au

Sofweb (Department of Education and Training Victoria) www.sofweb.vic.edu.au

Other resources

Copies of the resources in part four of this kit are available from the following places:

Close shaves Streetwise Publications

Telephone: 02 9319 0220 or
stwize@streetwize.com.au

Healthy Body art Pamphlet & Postcards

Department of Health and Aged Care
Telephone: 1800 020 103
<http://www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/publicat/hac.htm> ref# SH54939/ SH54940

General hep C resources and body art posters

Hepatitis C Council of Victoria
Telephone: 03 9380 4644 or 1800 703 003;
www.hepcvic.org.au

References

1. Ollis D & Mitchell A (2001). *Talking Sexual Health: a Teaching and Learning Resource for Secondary Schools*, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, VIC, for The Australian National Council on AIDS, Hepatitis and Related Diseases (ANCAHRD): page 80.
2. Lindsay J, Smith AMA & Rosenthal DA (1997). *Secondary Students, HIV/AIDS & Sexual Health 1997*. Monograph Series No.3, Centre for the Study of Sexually Transmissible Diseases, La Trobe University, Victoria: pages 26, 44.
3. *1 in 5 New Hepatitis C Infections are Among 15-19 year olds*, from the BBVI STI unit, Department of Human Services Victoria.
4. Ollis D & Watson J, et al (1999) *Talking Sexual Health: National Framework for education about STI's, HIV/AIDS and Blood-Borne Viruses in Secondary Schools*.
5. Van Der Ven P, Youdell D, Smith A, Mistler G & Pan Y (2001). *Hepatitis and Health: a Survey of High School Students in NSW*, National Centre in HIV Social Research, Faculty of Arts, UNSW: page 26.
6. Armstrong ML & Pace Murphy K (1997), *Tattooing: Another Adolescent Risk Behaviour Warranting Health Education*, Applied Nursing Research, Vol 10, No. 4: page 181.
7. Makkai T & McAllister I (2001) *Prevalence of Tattooing and Body Piercing in the Australian Community*, Research School of Social Services, Australian National University, ACT: page 3.

Educators' tool kit

This section consists of a series of related classroom activities for secondary students that address hepatitis C, body art and blood awareness.

These exercises are most appropriate for delivery to students in years 8 - 10. They are designed for whole class groups, and are amenable to classes of between 10 and 35 students. The times indicated below may vary, depending on class sizes.

Teaching contexts and timeframes differ widely between schools, which is why this section offers educators two options for the delivery of education sessions. This is to ensure that students are given adequate time to fully understand the nature of the hepatitis C virus, and its association with body art practices. It is important that these exercises are run over two separate days, so that young people are given the chance to absorb and utilise this information.

Behind each tab you will find directions and master sheets for producing the overhead slides or photocopied hand outs as required for each activity.

The two options are:

1. One double period, one single period
2. Two separate single periods

Option 1 (longer)

To be delivered over one double period and one single period

Session One (double period):

1. Famous - 30 minutes
2. What is hep C? - 35minutes
3. INK - 20 minutes

Session Two (single period - follow up):

1. Recap - 10 minutes
2. Hep C quiz - 35 minutes

Option 2 (shorter)

To be delivered over two separate single periods

Session One (single period):

1. Continuum - 10-15 minutes
2. What is hep C? - 30-35 minutes

Session Two (single period - follow up):

1. INK - 20 minutes
- 3 Hep C quiz - 20-25 minutes

Instructions for the delivery of each activity can be found by referring to the tabs listed above. It is recommended that educators familiarise themselves with the information contained in part one of this kit before delivering the classroom exercises.

Good luck!

BODY ART CONTINUUM

Overview of activity

Allow 20 minutes for this activity.

This activity aims to introduce the idea of body art, which can be understood **as the practice of decorating and adorning the body**.

This exercise demonstrates that body art, when such a broad definition is applied, is actually quite common. Students are given the opportunity to position a range of body art practices along a continuum, according to how they believe different forms of body art are viewed by society. Toward the end of the activity, specific body art practices that involve penetration of the skin are identified.

What you will need

1. One photocopy of each of the worksheets "forms of body art". Cut out as many words as there are students in the group. For this activity to work, it is important that the words are distributed in order of appearance on the list. For example, if there are ten students in the group, use the first ten words from the first column.
2. Three signs displaying one of each of the following words:
"NORMAL" (socially acceptable)
"?" (in between), and
"STRANGE" (unacceptable)
3. Sticky tape/ blutak
4. Enough space that students may move around and form a line.

Note: it is recommended that educators familiarise themselves with the body art terms using the glossary included in this section.

The activity

1. Clear a space in which to form an imaginary line from wall to wall. Place the signs "normal" and "strange" on either wall, and "?" in the middle of the line.
2. Distribute the cut out words so that each student has one word.
3. Begin by telling the class: We will be doing an exercise to think about the idea of body art, and adornment, and the different ways people decorate and modify their bodies, as well as the way our society views these practices.
4. Instruct students, while holding their word facing outwards, to have a look around at other students' words. Have students, as a group, place themselves and each other along this line, thinking about here and now, in Melbourne/ Victoria. More than one person can occupy the same point on the line.
Note: If appropriate or necessary, point out that this exercise may cause some disagreement, because people often have different ideas about what is normal and what is strange, just as people have different opinions and experiences and attitudes. There is no right or wrong. The point of the exercise is to see if the group can generalise, based on what 'most of society' might think, rather than what each of us as individuals thinks. You might ask the class: How would the line differ if we thought about our parent's generation? Or another country, like Mali in West Africa?
5. Once the group has organised itself into a line along the continuum of normal and strange, have each student along the line clearly read out their word.

BODY ART CONTINUUM_{continued}

6. After ensuring that the group is as close to consensus as possible, say: Adorning and decorating the body happens in all sorts of ways, and across many different cultures. Some of these adornments are worn every day and barely even noticed, and others stand out as being very unusual or different. This is very interesting. Does anyone have any comments on what it was like to do this exercise?

7. Instruct students to sit down unless their card has the symbol □.

8. Ask the group, referring to those remaining in the line, why these forms of body decoration have been singled out. What do they have in common? Students may come up with answers, many of which will be correct in some way. However this exercise is directed towards the issue of “skin penetration”. If students identify this issue, move on to the next exercise. If skin penetration is not identified, offer as a clue the name of the student carrying the “blood” card.

9. Next exercise > **What is Hep C?**

Forms of body art

□eyebrow rings

Makeovers

Face painting

Waxing

high heels

Nose j obs

□earrings

□septum rings

Bracelets

gold

Corsets

goatee

□Blood

□belly ring

shoul der pads

Clothes

□body tattoos

Hats

hair Cuts

□nose~rings

Solariums

□Labrets

□body piercings

nail polish

Forms of body art

Bangles

□lip~plates

Rings

□ear~weights

□Lip rings

□branding

facelift

□scarring

botox

Henna

makeup

girdles & bustles

body paint

hair dye

□studs

Gym workouts

Ochre

braces (teeth)

Collagen

Masquerades

Silver

□face tattoos

Glossary

> **Belly ring** also known as navel piercing, where a ring is worn in the navel > **blood** is used as body paint in some tribal rituals > **botox** is a cosmetic treatment whereby a muscle freezing chemical is injected under the skin to create the appearance of younger, tighter skin > **branding** a type of tribal ritual, often related to strength or bravery, in which the skin is burnt with symbols or patterns and scarring is encouraged > **collagen** a substance that is injected into the lips to enhance their shape and size > **corsets** also known as stays, rather severe undergarments worn by women for many years up until the early/mid 1900's, which reduced the size of the waist and encouraged perfect posture through use of tight lacing > **ear weights** a type of jewellery worn by many different cultures, where weights are worn to stretch and enlarge the earlobes, recently becoming popular with fans of body piercing > **face tattoos** many cultures tattoo the facial area for customary reasons, for example the Maori tradition of Moko is an ancient practice that connects the wearer to their ancestors > **girdles & bustles** old-fashioned undergarments worn by women to shape their bodies

> **henna** a natural pigment which is used extensively in central Asia, particularly India, to dye and decorate the skin and hair, as part of ceremonies and rituals, recently a popular alternative to permanent tattoos in Australia > **labret** also known as a lip ring, where a ring or stud is worn through the centre of the lower lip > **lip plates** a type of facial jewellery worn by women in parts of Africa, often a sign of high beauty > **ochre** a red or gold clay which is used as body paint in some tribal rituals > **scarring** also known as scarification, a similar rite of passage where the skin is cut and a scar is encouraged > **septum ring** also known as a bull ring, is a ring worn in the nose through the cartilage between the nostrils > **solariums** places where people can expose themselves to artificial sun in order to tan quickly.

Famous

Overview of activity:

Allow 30 minutes for this activity.

This activity will involve students in small group discussions about body art, society, and youth culture. Students will identify famous people with body art (tattoos and body piercings), and discuss whether celebrities who wear body art influence the way body art is viewed by society. After sharing ideas, the large group will be led through a brainstorm which will ultimately highlight the importance of health and virus prevention when thinking about body art.

When dividing the class into groups, remember that more small groups are more effective than fewer larger groups. Group work is an effective way to allow students to share ideas. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to remind the class of the importance of allowing everyone in the group a chance to speak, and of listening to the different ideas and opinions that group members may have.

What you will need:

1. Enough space to work in small groups
2. Butchers paper/markers for each group
3. Photocopies of the worksheet "group discussion points", one copy per small group
4. Black/white board, or large sheet of butcher paper for group brainstorming

The activity:

1. Begin by telling the young people: We will be doing something fun and a bit different today. We're going to be talking about body art. Body art is the way some people adorn or decorate themselves, and it includes things like body piercing and tattooing. Tattooing is when permanent ink is injected under the skin to form a design or picture, and body piercing is wearing jewellery in the skin, and includes earrings and nose rings, as well as eyebrow and navel rings.

2. Have the class break into small groups. Give each group a sheet of butcher paper and a marker, and a copy of the worksheet "group discussion points". Have one volunteer/nominee lead the discussion by following the discussion points on the worksheet.

3. Instruct the students to make a list, on butchers paper, of as many famous people with tattoos and piercings as they can. Instruct students to also discuss in their group the group discussion points, as read out by each group leader.

(Allow 10 minutes)

4. After the time is up, instruct small groups to rejoin the class. Invite a team to volunteer to begin, by reading out their list of famous people. After the group's list has been read, ask the speaker to talk about some of the group's thoughts on body art in society. Alternatively, all group members could be asked to feed back from their discussion. Ask subsequent groups to, first, add to the list any famous people not already mentioned, and then feed back from their discussion. To save time, for example if there are many groups in the class, consider asking each group for their response to just one of the points on the worksheet.

(Allow 10 -15 minutes)

Famous_{continued}

5. Ask the class if anyone has previously thought about body art, either about doing it or not doing it, and why/why not? Take a few responses.

6. Brainstorm: Ask the class, what are the things a person needs to consider if they are thinking about getting a body piercing or a tattoo? Write a heading on board, and take responses and make a list on the board.

7. When writing responses on the board, use the space directly beneath the heading for any points relating to hygiene/health/safety/infection control. If these concerns about health and safety are not raised, make a clear point that this is a dangerous omission. State that blood awareness is more important than any type of jewellery, or choice of design, or colour or cost.

(Allow 5 -10 minutes)

8. Next exercise > > **What is Hep C?**

Famous - group discussion points

=make a list of as many famous people and characters with tattoos and body piercings as you can.

??do you like tattoos? Body piercings? Why or why not?

??do you have a favourite example of body art? A least favourite?

??do famous people that have body art affect the way that society views tattooing and body piercing? Why/ why not?

??has your opinion changed about body art in the last few years?
How?

What is hep C?

Overview of Activity:

Allow 30-35 minutes for this activity.

This information-based exercise provides students with an overview of hepatitis C transmission, prevention, blood awareness and the symptoms of viral infection. An overhead transparency is used to talk the class through the hep C basics, using the information detailed below.

What you will need:

1. Transparency copy and/or photocopies of master work sheet "what is hep C?" for distribution
2. Overhead projector

The activity:

This exercise outlines an education session which is information (rather than activity) based.

1. Begin by asking the class for responses to the following questions:

- > What is hepatitis C?
- > What does it affect?
- > Where is the liver?
- > What is the function of the liver?
- > How is hep C transmitted?

Take answers from class members, but make the point that the questions are just to get a sense of how much the class knows about hep C.

Note: Frequently, students will have a poor knowledge of hepatitis C, and modes of transmission. It is important to allow students to hear these 'misconceptions' and 'myths' about hepatitis C.

2. Display overhead and/or distribute handout "What is hep C?"

3. The following notes relate to the overhead/handout "What is hep C?"

⊖ Hepatitis is a general word for inflammation of the liver, and hep C is one serious type. It is different to A and B. There is no vaccination, and the pharmaceutical treatment that is currently available has only a limited success rate.

⊖ The liver is a vital organ to have in working order, as its function is to metabolise waste products and deliver nutrients to the necessary places in the body. Hep C is a serious disease that affects the function of the liver, which in turn can have serious effects on health and well-being.

⊖ The most important message for young people to understand is that hepatitis C is transmitted via **BLOOD to BLOOD** contact. Write this on the board, and explain that the hep C virus is a very strong virus that can be found in tiny, even invisible amounts of blood. For transmission to occur, hep C infected blood has to enter another person's bloodstream, which means the skin must be broken.

Using the overhead transparency, talk through the modes of transmission.

⊖ Injecting: discuss this with students, to whatever degree is appropriate, highlighting the message of never sharing needles, and equally importantly, never sharing other equipment used when injecting (for more information see 'Referrals and resources' in part one of this kit).

⊖ Skip body art transmission for a moment...

⊖ Childbirth: if a mother has the hep C virus, in around 5% of births the hep C virus is transmitted to the baby. This occurs if the baby's skin is torn during the birthing process.

⊖ Unsterile medical or dental procedures: all medical and dental procedures must by law comply with infection control and standard precautions. This means that ALL blood and body fluids must be treated as infectious, and anything coming into contact with these fluids

>

What is hep C?^{continued}

must be sterilised or disposed of accordingly. There have been, however, occasions when such precautions have not been consistently practiced, and transmission of the hep C virus has occurred.

⊖ Blood transfusion pre 1991: the hep C virus was only discovered in 1989, before which time it was called non A - non B hepatitis, a virus about which very little was known. In 1991 a hepatitis C antibody test was developed, and from then on all blood products were screened for the hep C virus. This shows that hepatitis C is a relatively new virus in Australia, and the spread of hep C is not yet under control. Each year, thousands of people are infected with hep C, and many more people have the virus but have not been tested or diagnosed.

⊖ Sexual transmission of hep C: **read out overhead**. The risk of hep C being transmitted through sexual activity is extremely low. Any sexual activity that might involve breaking the skin or mucous membrane in some way is potentially risky for hep C transmission. Many young people consider menstrual blood to be somehow different to 'other' blood, so it is important to emphasise that this is not the case.

⊖ Transmission can only occur if **the blood of an infected person enters another person's bloodstream**.

⊖ Body art: ask the class -- How could transmission of the hepatitis C virus occur through body art?

Needles are used in both tattooing and body piercing. Both procedures involve breaking the skin and contact with blood. HOWEVER, blood awareness is not limited to just thinking about skin penetration (e.g. the piercing needle or the needle on the tattoo gun that injects, with a sewing machine-like mechanism, the ink into the skin). Great care should be taken whenever blood is present. Any object that comes into contact with blood can play a role in transmitting the hep C virus from one person to another.

⊖ Make a note, for example, of the 'blood rule' in sport. The blood rule basically says "**All blood is treated as infectious**, all blood is considered a potential health risk. All blood is taken off the field." These rules are not about hysteria, just common sense. So **be blood aware**.

⊖ The experience of living with Hepatitis C. A common misconception about hepatitis C is that it automatically results in death. This is untrue, many people with hep C manage their illness and live normal full lives. Most people that are infected will have chronic infection, with about half likely to develop long term symptoms and liver damage. When the virus is newly transmitted, hep C is usually without symptoms.

Hep C is a slow acting virus, and symptoms usually appear around 13 years from date of infection. When symptoms develop, different people experience different symptoms. Some of these include debilitating chronic fatigue, nausea, fever and pain. About a quarter of people infected with the virus will clear it naturally from their system. A small number, about 3 or 4 in 100, will go on to develop serious damage such as liver failure and/or cancer.

What is hep C?

Hepat - the latin word for liver.

Hepatitis - a condition where the liver is swollen or inflamed.

Hepatitis C - a type of hepatitis, which is different from hepatitis A or B.

What is hepatitis C?

- ⊖ **Hepatitis C** is a very serious disease that affects the functioning of the liver.
- ⊖ The **hep C** virus lives in the **blood**, and is transmitted when the **blood of an infected person enters the bloodstream of another**. **Blood to blood** contact is the only way **hepatitis C** is transmitted.

The most common ways that the hep C virus is transmitted in Australia today are:

- ⊖ Sharing injecting equipment (syringes and any equipment that may touch the injection site, eg tourniquet, spoons, fingers).
- ⊖ Unsterile tattooing or body piercing procedures.
- ⊖ Unsterile medical/ dental procedures.
- ⊖ From mother to child.
- ⊖ Blood transfusions **before** 1991.

What about sex?

Hepatitis C is only transmitted from blood to blood contact. It is not considered a sexually transmissible infection (STI), because it is not transmitted via other bodily fluids. In any case, **safer sex**, especially when blood is present (eg menstruation), is **always** the best practice.

People living with hepatitis C experience a range of symptoms and conditions

Roughly, of 100 people infected -

- >25 will **clear the virus** out of their bodies
- >75 will become **chronically infected**

Of those 75 -

- >20 will not develop liver damage or symptoms
- >45 will develop long term symptoms and liver damage (after 15 years)
- >7 will develop cirrhosis (after 30 years)
- >3 people will experience liver cancer or failure (after 25 years)

Overview of activity:

Allow 20 minutes for this activity.

This role play exercise will give students an opportunity to visualise and understand the nature of blood awareness and cross contamination in a body art context. The role play is set in a tattoo studio, where a customer arrives to have a tattoo done. During the course of the procedure the tattooist is interrupted several times. This exercise will illustrate the nature of cross contamination to the class. Students will also learn a number of protective steps they might take in the event that they decide to obtain a piece of body art.

What you will need:

1. Photocopies of the worksheets "Role cards", cut into sections
2. Space for a mock tattoo studio
3. Latex gloves (if available) for tattooist
4. Transparency copy of the worksheet "Advice before getting a piece of body art" and/or copies for handouts
5. Overhead projector

The activity:

1. Begin by asking the class: Does anyone here want to get a body piercing or tattoo? Which one, and why? Take a few answers from class members. Inform class that a role play will take place.

2. Ask: Does anyone want to get a tattoo today? Choose a volunteer, and ask them what kind of 'tattoo' they want. Next, ask if anyone wants to be a 'tattooist'. Give each volunteer their respective role cards, and distribute the remaining two role cards ('Interruptions') to other class members. Allow them to read through all the roles together, and work out the scene. This need only take a few minutes.

3. While the players are preparing, have the class choose a name for the tattoo studio (write this on the board) and the names of the tattooist and the client. Consider setting up two chairs, and invite the players into the imaginary studio.

4. Commence the role play. The tattoo process is played out and narrated, and interruptions occur during the tattoo procedure.

5. After interruption #2, stand up in front of players and say, "FREEZE".

6. Say: "What if, earlier today, an identical scenario took place: a tattoo, with ordinary interruptions. WHAT IF THE PREVIOUS CLIENT HAD HEP C?"

Thank the players, and ask them to remain in the studio. Have the class make a verbal list of possible blood contaminated objects, that is, anything that the tattooist may have touched during the procedure, eg razor, pen, door handle, phone, tap, cup etc.

The main question for this discussion is: How could the hep C virus find a vehicle for transmission here? Transmission is not only about a virus moving directly from one bloodstream to another. Objects that are

contaminated with blood, even tiny invisible amounts of blood, can potentially play a role in viral transmission.

Introduce the following to the discussion:

A good body artist will do many of the things demonstrated in the role play. BUT many important things were left out by our tattooist. A good body artist will clean and disinfect all surfaces between clients. S/he will cover objects handled during the procedure, such as phone handsets and light switches, with cling-wrap, which is changed between clients. S/he will also ensure that all the things needed during the procedure are sterilised and within reach, in order to avoid interruptions to the procedure. These are some of the precautions used to prevent cross contamination.

Distribute the worksheet/display the overhead "Advice before getting a piece of body art", and read it through with students. Tell the class that individual body artists are not registered with and approved by the health authorities. Only the building or studio that houses the business is registered. There is no formal training course or qualification, or even a minimum standard of skill or quality of work, to become a body piercer or tattooist. You can say, "I could be a body piercer if I wanted to!" It is important for body art customers to do their homework regarding the practice of individual body artists, not just the studio in which they work.

Ink - role play cards

TATTOOIST

You are the owner of this tattoo studio, and you have been tattooing for many years, probably longer than most of your customers have been alive. This particular client seems a bit nervous so you explain that you always use clean needles on the tattoo gun and always wear gloves. Your client has never been tattooed before, and because s/he seems so nervous you explain the tattoo process step by step as you do the tattoo.

Step 1: I will clean and shave the area

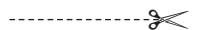
Step 2: I will make a stencil of this picture and make a transfer of the outline on your skin

Step 3: I will use this sterile needle, from this fresh packet which you see me open

Step 4: I will use fresh containers to hold the ink, and ink fresh from the bottle, that has not been used on anyone else.

Step 5: I will begin tattooing (bzzzzzt bzzzzzt) which is basically drawing by injecting ink under your skin with this tattoo gun, which is quite similar to the way a sewing machine works, same principle. So the tattoo site will bleed, and it will be like a graze or open wound.

During the tattoo you are interrupted several times...to go and get a glass of water, to answer the phone and book an appointment (the phone is over on the other side of the room, next to your appointment book), and to sign a cheque. All in a days work!



CLIENT

You enter the studio, determined but really nervous. You give the design of your tattoo to the tattooist and tell him/her where on your body you want the tattoo (eg back, arm). You aren't sure what to say or do, and want to get it over with, or at least started! The tattooist tries to reassure you that it's all OK. You tell the tattooist that you have never had a tattoo before and would like to have the procedure explained.

The tattooist then explains the procedure as s/he does the tattoo.

When the tattooist starts the tattoo (bzzzzt...ouch!!) after about three seconds you say, "sorry, but I think I might need a glass of water, this is kind of painful." The tattooist is interrupted several more times... all in a days work!

Ink - role play cards

INTERRUPTION #1

You are a tattooist who also works at this studio. Your boss, who is currently doing a tattoo, forgot to sign your pay cheque. So you knock and enter, tell him/her about the missing signature, hand over a pen and paper, and ask him/her to sign on the dotted line.

Note: this interruption occurs during the actual tattoo procedure (step 5)



INTERRUPTION #2

You are a mad tattoo freak who is covered in tattoos and you have decided to have your face tattoo finished. You ring up the tattooist, and say, "it's me, the mad tattoo freak, and I want to make an appointment to finish my face tattoo, have you got any appointments next Tuesday?" You make the appointment and, well, that's pretty much it.

Note: this interruption occurs during the actual tattoo procedure (step 5)

Some advice

BEFORE getting a piece of body art

- ⊖ Make sure the body piercing/ tattooing studio is registered with the council.

- ⊖ Ask friends and acquaintances for recommendations.

- ⊖ Visit the studio and try and meet the body artist in person to discuss design and placement. They should be happy to talk with you about these things. Take a friend if you like.

- ⊖ Ask the artist about their knowledge and practice of infection control procedures. They should be willing and able to demonstrate this knowledge to you. IF they can't, or won't, then GO SOMEWHERE ELSE. Find a studio where these practices are valued.

- ⊖ Assess the general cleanliness and organisation of the studio. The piercing/ tattoo area should be separate from the main area of the studio, and should be very clean.
 - ⊖ If possible observe the artist at work, do they:
 - ~ use and replace gloves if interrupted?
 - ~ open needle packs and other sterile equipment in front of the customer?
 - ~ clean and sterilise surfaces and equipment between clients (eg telephone)?

- ⊖ Call the Hepatitis C Council of Victoria 03 9380 4644 or 1800 703 003 (country callers) and ask to speak to someone about safe body art.

Hep C Quiz

Overview of activity:

This is the final activity of the hep C and body art educators' kit. As a conclusion, it aims to give students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of hepatitis C. The activity is in the form of a quiz, where students are asked a series of questions, and points are awarded for correct answers.

There are many different ways to conduct quiz game activities. The activity described here is just one of these ways. Feel free to use the basic set of questions and answers, found on the following pages, to conduct the quiz in a style that suits you.

What you will need:

1. Photocopy of 'Hep C quiz Q&A'
2. Paper and pens

Note on time limits: This exercise provides a long list of questions and answers, which can be used in part or whole, depending on the time available. Make sure that the activity has moved into 'Round Two' 5-10 minutes before the end of the session.

The activity:

1. Inform the class that a quiz will take place.
2. Invite or nominate volunteers: one to be the 'Quiz Show Host', and another to keep score. The teacher may take either of these roles.
3. Divide the class into groups of between 3 and 6. Give each team a name.
4. Have the class and the scorekeeper decide how teams will answer questions (eg raised hands, shouting out the team name, buzzer, hooter etc.)
5. 'Round One': The host will read out questions. Groups must quietly discuss the question, and come up with the answer based on previous discussions and exercises about hepatitis C. The first team to give the correct answer is awarded a point. Another option for scoring is to offer a bonus point if teams can explain **why** they answered TRUE or FALSE.
6. Once all questions are asked, or the time limit is reached, have the scorekeeper collate the scores.
7. The two teams with the highest scores move on to 'Round Two'. Two bonus questions are asked of each team, separately. If the score is still matched, move on to the questions in 'Round Three: Penalty Shootout'. A team wins when the other team gives a wrong answer.

Hep C quiz Q&A

1. you can get hep C from mosquitoes

FALSE. Mosquitoes and other insects do not transmit hep C. The virus does not survive in insects.

2. you can get hep C by sharing injecting equipment when injecting drugs

TRUE. Sharing syringes, spoons, swabs, filters, tourniquets and water poses a risk for the transmission of hep C.

3. you can get hep C by donating blood

FALSE. You cannot contract the virus by giving blood. Before 1991, hep C has been transmitted from receiving blood (transfusion), however all blood products are now screened for the hep C virus.

4. you can get hep C by sharing a cup with someone who has Hep C

FALSE. Hep C is only transmitted when the blood of an infected person enters the bloodstream of another. Hepatitis C cannot be transmitted by eating or drinking.

5. you can get hep C by sharing toothbrushes or razors with someone who has the virus

TRUE. Because gums bleed and razors sometimes cut the skin, there is a small but significant risk that hep C could be transmitted this way.

6. you can get hep C by kissing someone who has Hep C

FALSE. The hepatitis C virus is not contained in saliva. Kissing does not involve blood to blood contact.*

7. hep C can be a manageable, long term condition TRUE.

8. you can get hep C when someone with the virus coughs or sneezes near you

FALSE. The hep C virus lives neither in air particles or mucus and must enter the bloodstream in order to be transmitted.

9. you can tell by looking at someone that they have hep C

FALSE. Many people with hep C appear healthy, in fact many people with hep C do not even know they have the virus. Some people experience symptoms like weight loss or yellow jaundice, but not everyone.

10. most people with hep C live quite a normal life span TRUE.

11. it is possible to be vaccinated against hep C in Australia

FALSE. There is no such vaccination available anywhere in the world.

12. body piercing is safe if sterile needles are used every time

FALSE. Sterile needles are very important to the safety of body piercing, however body piercers must ensure that any other objects that come into contact with blood (including anything they touch during the procedure) are also disinfected and sterilised accordingly.

13. the hep C virus affects the liver

TRUE. The liver is a vital organ that breaks down chemicals and waste products in the body, and hep C eventually affects the liver's ability to perform this function.

14. it is possible to be vaccinated against hepatitis B in Australia TRUE.

15. only people who have injected drugs can get hepatitis C

FALSE. Even though unsafe injecting is the most common way hep C is transmitted in Australia today, the virus can also be transmitted through tattooing, body piercing, and to a lesser extent by sharing personal items that sometimes come into contact with blood like toothbrushes, razors and nail scissors. Hep C can also be transmitted through unsterile medical or dental procedures.

16. people from all walks of life can have hep C

TRUE. The hepatitis C virus does not discriminate. People can be exposed to the hep C virus from just one unsafe experimentation with injecting, or even from sharing an ear piercing needle with someone else.

17. people with hep C must tell their workmates they have the virus

FALSE. All workplaces must use standard precautions, which means that all blood (eg cuts and blood spills) should be considered infectious. It is therefore not necessary for people to declare their hep C status.

Hep C quiz Q&A continued

18. there is a risk of getting hepatitis C from body art that involves skin penetration
TRUE.

19. hep C can be spread by all body fluids
FALSE. Hep C can only be spread by blood to blood contact. The virus is only found in blood.

20. you can get hep C if you are bitten by a flea FALSE.

21. if a tattoo studio is health department approved, then it is a safe place to be tattooed
FALSE. All tattoo studios have had their premises approved by the health department, as that is the minimum legal requirement to open a business. However individual tattooists, and the ways they work, are not subject to health department approval. Health department approval therefore does not guarantee safety.

22. people with hep C should not play sport
FALSE. All sports should have a blood rule, which means that anyone who bleeds is taken out of play. When all blood is treated as infectious, there is no need to exclude anyone. Excluding people on this basis is discrimination.

23. people with hep C should not get tattoos or body piercings
FALSE. To exclude people from obtaining body art is discrimination.

24. people with hep C don't have to tell their tattooist or piercer about their virus
TRUE. Tattooists and body piercers are required by law to implement 'universal precautions', which are a series of practices that ensure that all blood is treated as infectious.

25. the first time a belly ring was worn was 1979
FALSE. There is evidence that women wore belly rings in ancient Egypt!

26. most people with hep C will eventually die from it
FALSE. Less than 5% of people with hep C will develop life threatening liver conditions.

27. the hep C virus can live outside the body for several days
TRUE. In fact, recent studies indicate that under scientifically controlled conditions the virus is capable of living for up to 2 weeks outside the body.

28. trace (invisible) amounts of blood can contain the hep C virus TRUE.

29. it is safe to swap earrings and other body jewellery
FALSE. Because these types of jewellery come into contact with blood, and piercing sites are sometimes unstable (e.g. infected), there is a risk of transmission of the hep C virus.

30. it is safe to be 'blood brothers/ sisters'
FALSE. Hep C is transmitted when the blood of an infected person enters the bloodstream of another, making this quite a risky thing to do.

31. standard or universal precautions mean that all blood should be treated as infectious
TRUE.

32. hep C is not as serious as hep A or hep B
FALSE.

33. all body piercing studios have infection control procedures in place
FALSE. Many body piercing studios do, but some don't. So it is important for customers to make sure that their body piercer understands infection control and is willing and able to demonstrate this knowledge.

34. the first known tattoo was in 3000 BC
TRUE. However it is possible that tattoos were being performed long before archaeologists have found the evidence to prove this true.

35. you can get hep C from kissing someone with a tongue piercing who is Hep C positive
FALSE. *

36. you can get hep C from eating contaminated food
FALSE. Hep C is only transmitted via blood to blood contact.

Hep C quiz Q&A continued

37. babies can get hep C from breast feeding

FALSE. Hep C is only transmitted via blood to blood contact. Hepatitis C is not found in breast milk.

38. only people with blood-borne viruses (such as HIV or hep C) should have to comply with the blood rule in sport.

FALSE. Not only would this be discrimination, but it suggests that every person infected with a BBV knows they are infected. This is not the case. The blood rule states that any blood spills that occur during play are taken out of play and treated as infectious.

39. hepatitis B can be spread by blood and body fluids TRUE.

***a note about blood.** Whenever there is blood present (fresh piercings, cut lips from cracked crockery, bleeding gums) a sensible amount of caution is a good idea. It is almost impossible for the virus to be transmitted in these ways, and there is no record of any such transmission occurring. **Hep C can only be transmitted when infected blood gets under another persons skin and into their bloodstream.** Nonetheless, all blood should be treated with caution.

Bonus questions

(3 points for all correct, lose 1 point for incorrect or incomplete answer)

1. name three things the liver does
2. name five famous women with body piercings or tattoos
3. name five famous men with body piercings or tattoos
4. name three ways that hep C is transmitted

'Penalty shoot out' questions

1. many people have caught hep C from stepping on discarded syringes

FALSE. Whilst it is theoretically possible, there is currently no record of hep C being transmitted in this way.

2. if you don't inject drugs then you wont get the hep C virus

FALSE. You could catch hep C through body piercing or tattooing

3. Hep C is the most frequently notified blood-borne virus in Australia

TRUE.

4. in the past tattoos have been used as a form of punishment

TRUE.

5. it is illegal to treat a person less favourably (discriminate) because they have the Hep C virus

TRUE.

Information sheets for young people

The following information is designed as stand alone material. Ideally, this information should be displayed somewhere within reach of students, such as the counsellor or nurse's office, the health area or student bulletin board. All young people need to have access to information about the prevention of blood borne viruses (BBVs).

It is important that young people can readily see this information on display, and have access to it without necessarily having to engage with teachers or other school staff. The information sheets are provided as master copies, and are best copied double sided onto coloured paper. They can also be distributed to students on completion of the unit.

Information sheet 1 :
Body art and hepatitis C: what are the risks?

Information sheet 2:
Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS

Body art and hepatitis C: What are the risks?

Hepatitis C is a virus that attacks the liver. It is found in blood, and is transmitted when the blood of an infected person enters another person's bloodstream. There is no vaccination for hepatitis C and the pharmaceutical treatment for the virus is only successful for some people. The process of getting a body piercing or tattoo involves blood and results in an open wound being created. These conditions are perfect for the transmission of the hep C virus, as there is an opportunity for blood to blood contact to occur.

How to Protect Yourself

Body art practices, such as piercing and tattooing, can put you at risk of being exposed to hepatitis C, so it is important that you understand how you can protect yourself from this very serious virus. There are rules and guidelines that body artists (that is, body piercers and tattooists) should follow to prevent transmission of the hep C virus. While as a customer you would not be expected to know all these 'infection control' guidelines, a body artist should be happy to discuss with you the preventative measures they use in their practice. If a body artist is not confident in talking about infection control measures, you should seriously consider going somewhere else.

Sterilisation

Everything that is to be used during the tattooing or piercing procedure should be single use and new, or appropriately sterilised. Everything that the body artist is going to need during the process should be readily available and within reach. Needles are used in both piercings and tattoos. Single use needles should be opened from their packet in front of you, both to show that they're being used only once, and also to ensure that they remain sterile until the time they are needed in the procedure. If needles are not single use then they should be sterilised according to industry standards, and opened from their sterilisation package in front of you.

Blood Contamination

Hepatitis C can live outside the body for several days, and even a small, invisible amount of blood can contain enough viral load to pose a transmission risk. So there is more to safe body art than clean needles! Razors are often used to shave the area in preparation for a tattoo or piercing. These must also be single use. A razor may nick or cut the skin and, if the same razor nicks the skin of two different people, an opportunity for blood to blood contact arises. Anything the tattooist or piercer touches during the procedure comes into contact with blood. If for any reason the body artist has to break from the procedure, they should wash their hands and put on new gloves before resuming the work. The bench area, chair and other fixtures should be clean. Most tattooists and piercers cover chairs and benches with plastic, and their telephones and light fittings with cling film, which they change between appointments.

Body art and hepatitis C: What are the risks?

continued

Questions to Ask Prior to Having a Procedure

The Hepatitis C Council would advise anyone considering getting a tattoo or body piercing to consider (or ask about) the following:

- >> What is the practitioner's level of experience or training?
- >> Does the practitioner have an awareness of infection control and take steps to prevent the transmission of blood-borne viruses like hep C? An experienced and professional artist should be able and willing to discuss their infection control practices with you.
- >> Does the practitioner wash their hands? Do they use new gloves before starting a procedure? Do they change their gloves during the procedure if for any reason they are interrupted?
- >> Are sterilised or new needles, instruments and jewellery opened from their packets in your presence?

If you are seriously considering getting some sort of body art, or you know someone who is, it is really important to be blood aware. You could spend a long time deciding what body art you want: planning, designing, and saving up for your piercing or tattoo. It's just as important for you to think about what you DON'T want: and you DON'T want the hep C virus. When you talk to the body artist about all the finer points of body art, make it an opportunity to discuss infection control measures and other safety issues. Remember, if a tattooist or piercer seems uneasy about talking about infection control, or makes you feel uneasy asking about it, then you should seriously consider going elsewhere.

Prices for body art can vary quite a bit, and cheaper services aren't necessarily the safest. Never have any body art done unless you're sure it's safe, even if it means you have to wait a bit longer and save more cash. Having hep C could mean living with a serious illness for the rest of your life.

For free information contact the Hepatitis C Council of Victoria on 9380 4644 or go to WWW.hepcvic.org.au

Hepatitis C

What exactly is it?

Hepatitis is the general name for several different illnesses which all cause the same problem: an inflamed (swollen or painful) liver. Hepatitis C is a virus that is present in blood. There is no vaccination against hep C, and the current treatment available is only successful for some people. It is a serious virus that some people will recover from, but most people will become chronically infected and have the virus long-term. A small number of people may develop liver cancer.

How is the Hep C virus transmitted?

The hep C virus can only be spread through blood-to-blood contact. This means that the blood of an infected person needs to enter the bloodstream of another. There are only a few ways this can happen: sharing injecting equipment; un-sterile tattooing, body piercing and acupuncture; un-sterile medical or dental procedures; and sharing items like razors, toothbrushes and nail scissors that sometimes come into contact with blood.

Aren't there other ways it can be spread?

Not easily. You can't get it from hugging, kissing, sharing crockery or utensils, mosquitoes, sneezing or coughing. Having said that, it is always a good idea to be very cautious if there is a blood spill. All blood should be treated as infectious, that is why there is a 'blood rule' in sport: just to be on the safe side. Hep C is not classified as a sexually transmitted infection. However, menstrual (period) blood really is blood, so if you are having sex, always be aware of any cuts or open wounds that might allow an opportunity for blood-to-blood contact to occur.

How do you know if you have it?

The reason why hep C is such a huge problem is that lots of people have the virus and don't know they have it. Most people who have hep C won't experience any symptoms until about 13 years after they contracted the virus. If you've ever shared any equipment used during injecting, you are at high risk of having been exposed to the hep C virus. You need to have a blood test to find out if you've been infected.

How do you avoid getting it?

Unlike HIV, the hep C virus is very strong and can live outside the body for several days. It is also a very small virus, and can be contained in tiny invisible amounts of blood, even on fingertips and tabletops.

SAFE BODY ART (TATTOOING AND PIERCING): Because tattooing and body piercing involve skin penetration and therefore blood, it is important to always use professional body art services. Not only should businesses be Health Department Approved, you should always choose a reputable body artist who can (and is happy to) demonstrate extensive knowledge and skill in safe and healthy body art.

DON'T SHARE INJECTING EQUIPMENT: Remember this always, even if you never need to know it. Never ever share needles, syringes, spoons, swabs, filters, tourniquets... ANYTHING at all. Never double dip, and always wash your hands before and after injecting.

HIV/AIDS

What exactly is it?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. The virus attacks the immune system, which is the body's defence against disease. People living with HIV (said to be HIV positive) can live for years feeling and looking healthy. Having HIV can result in Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which is the name given to a collection of symptoms of life threatening conditions. A person develops AIDS because his/her immune system's ability to fight infections has been compromised by the HIV virus.

How is the HIV virus transmitted?

Unsafe sex and sharing injecting equipment are the two most common ways the HIV virus is transmitted. The HIV virus lives in blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk, and is spread when any of these fluids passes from an infected person into the bloodstream of another.

How do you know if you have it?

HIV antibodies can be detected by having a blood test at your doctor or at a sexual health clinic. Some people experience a flu-like sickness when they acquire the virus, and others do not. You are at risk of catching the HIV virus if you have unsafe sex or share injecting equipment.

How do you avoid getting it?

SAFER SEX: any kind of sex that doesn't allow semen, vaginal fluid or blood to pass from one person into the blood stream of another is safer sex. Safer sex is everyone's responsibility: whether you're male, female, HIV positive or HIV negative, straight, bi or gay. Always use a condom. If it's not on, it's not on!!

DON'T SHARE INJECTING EQUIPMENT: Remember this always, even if you never need to know it. Never ever share needles, syringes, spoons, swabs, tourniquets... ANYTHING at all. You were always taught to share. This is the exception. Drugs are dangerous enough without the added risk of contracting a serious virus.

How do you use a condom?

Check the use by date, and choose one that fits, as they come in different shapes and sizes. Practice with different condoms to get used to their feel. Squeeze the air out of the tip of the condom before rolling it all the way to the base of the penis. Put it on before any penetration actually happens. Use water-based lubricant (not oil based!!) on the outside of the condom... and remember to hold the base of the condom when withdrawing to keep it on.

For info and links :

contact the Hepatitis C Council of Victoria on 03 9380 4644 or 1800 703 003 for country callers or go to WWW.hepcvic.org.au.

check AIDS Hepatitis and Sexual Health Line on 03 9349 1111 or 1800 800 241 for country callers or go to www.aidshep.org.au

Extra Resources

This section contains a range of hep C and healthy body art resources, which may be useful for educators.

Information on how to obtain further copies of these resources can be found in part one.

About the Council

The Hepatitis C Council of Victoria Incorporated is a statewide organisation representing the needs of people with hepatitis C, their partners, carers, friends and family members.

The Council provides education, referrals, advocacy, community support and resources to the Victorian community.

There are a number of fact sheets and pamphlets available at the Council that further expand on some of the topics raised in this kit. If you wish to order any of these please use the Hepatitis C Council of Victoria resource order form enclosed.

Contact the Council at:

Suite 5, 200 Sydney Road
Brunswick Victoria 3056

Telephone: (03) 9380 4644
Country callers: 1800 703 003
Fax: (03) 9380 4688
Email: info@hepcvic.org.au
Web: www.hepcvic.org.au