

### What is Hepatitis C?

- Hepatitis C is a highly contagious and severe liver disease
- Can be acute or chronic
  - Acute Hepatitis C typically cleared within 6 months
  - Without proper treatment, chronic Hepatitis C is life long

### Symptoms of Hepatitis C

- Fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, upset stomach, throwing up, dark urine, grey-colored stool, joint pain, yellow skin and eyes
- Acute vs Chronic
  - Acute: symptom present 2 weeks to 6 months of infection
  - Chronic: may not appear for decades

### How is Hepatitis C spread by drug use?

- Hepatitis C is spread through contact with contaminated blood, and is **HIGHLY** contagious. Contact with **VERY** small amounts of infected blood can spread the virus for up to **6 WEEKS**
- Sharing needles and syringes and anything that they come into contact with, including preparation equipment
- Snorting straws can become contaminated by small amounts of blood in nasal passages
- Pipes can become contaminated by blood in the lungs, mouth, lips, gums, and hands

- **REMEMBER:** Hepatitis C is **HIGHLY** contagious and can be spread by coming into contact with **ANYTHING** that has been contaminated with **VERY** small amounts of blood
  - What can you think of that meets this criteria?

### How else is Hepatitis C spread?

- Sharing equipment used for tattoo, piercing, cutting that has become contaminated with infected blood
- Pregnant women can pass Hepatitis C to baby

### Is it possible to become re-infected with Hepatitis C?

- Yes! It does not matter if Hepatitis C was cleared with or without treatment; you can be re-infected in the same way, at the same risk

### Is there treatment for Hepatitis C?

- Yes! Be open and honest with your doctor. Doctors face severe legal and financial consequences if they disclose your health information. Your privacy is protected, and the exam room is a safe place