

EASY C FACTS

The Immune System

Your body has an **immune system**. This system acts like an army whose job is to protect your health. Your immune system is made up of cells and organs. These protect you from **foreign invaders**, such as germs. It's your immune system's job to find and destroy these germs.

Your liver has an important role in your immune system. Your liver produces all sorts of things that protect you and keep you healthy. You need your immune system to keep you healthy. Without it you would be under constant **attack from germs** that could cause you to become very sick or even die.

Germs come in lots of

types. Bacteria, parasites and viruses – **hepatitis C (HCV or Hep C for short) is a type of virus**. If Hep C tries to attack your body, your immune system does everything it can to fight it off. Some people's immune systems **successfully defend** them against Hep C. These people (about 2 or 4 out of 10) do not develop chronic Hep C. Their blood will carry proof that their immune system fought against Hep C. This proof is known as **Hep C antibodies**. Antibodies are like having battle scars after the enemy has long left the field. Most people do go on to have chronic Hep C. Since Hep C is a virus that can mess up your health, it's a good idea to take care of your immune system.

There are many things you can do to stay healthy:

- Eat healthy food
- Avoid alcohol and street drugs
- Get plenty of sleep along with daily exercise
- Get vaccinated against Hep A and Hep B if you need to
- Wash hands well and often

www.hcvadvocate.org

 **HEPATITIS C**
SUPPORT PROJECT