

### 3. Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is transmitted similar to Hepatitis B but slightly different virus. There is no vaccine for HCV and research is in progress. Almost 30 crore people are infected with this virus world wide. Majority are not aware of their infection status as they find no symptoms. They develop symptoms anywhere between 15 to 150 days. However, infected persons are source of transmission to others.



#### Transmission

HCV is transmitted mainly through blood. Unsafe blood transfusion, unsafe sex, sharing needles, syringes, and personal utilities like toothbrushes or razors are some of the means of transmission. The infection is often without symptoms, but once established, chronic infection can progress to liver cirrhosis, eventually leading to liver cancer or liver failure. Symptoms include loss of appetite, weight loss, mild flue like illness, nausea, jaundice, itchy skin etc.

#### Treatment & Prevention

Vaccine for Hepatitis C is not available as the virus can mutate like HIV. To reduce the burden of HCV infection strict observation of preventive measures is the solution. Recently, Interferon and antiviral drugs have proved effective against Hepatitis C. It is advisable to ensure safe blood source while transfusing, avoid unsafe sex practices, use condom and pick standard single use needles and syringes. Also avoid sharing personal utilities like razors.