

## Self Help Tips for Living with the Symptoms of Hepatitis C

- The symptoms of hepatitis C can affect all areas of life including personal relationships, family dynamics, social situations, employment and plans for the future
- There are a number of support services available that include:
  - Drug user organisations and peer support groups
  - Magazines and newsletters
  - Telephone help lines
  - Websites and newsgroups
- Nutrition is important for people living with hepatitis C. People living with hepatitis C should:
  - Enjoy a wide variety of foods
  - Eat whole grain bread, cereals, vegetables and fruit
  - Eat low fat products
  - Engage in regular exercise
  - Limit alcohol intake
  - Minimise sugar and salt intake
- Nausea can be problematic for people who are living with hepatitis C this can be helped by:
  - Eating small amounts often rather than big meals
  - Eating when hungry
  - Choosing foods that contain lots of vitamins and minerals
  - Nutritional supplements maybe useful
- Loss of appetite can be helped by:
  - Eating small amounts regularly
  - Eating meals with other people
  - Trying different tastes to stimulate appetite
  - Cold foods may be tolerated a bit more easily
- Fatigue can result when the body's immune system is compromised and can be helped by:
  - acknowledging the experience of fatigue and its symptoms;
  - planning the day to avoid overload;
  - having regular breaks and time out can reduce fatigue; and
  - experimenting with exercise which can increase energy.
- Oral and dental health can become increasingly problematic for people living with hepatitis C. Symptoms can include dry mouth, tooth sensitivity and decay, gum infections and mouth ulcerations. Access to oral health and dental treatment is costly and for many people living with hepatitis C this is a difficult symptom to manage.
- Complementary therapies are increasingly being used to manage the symptoms of hepatitis C including acupuncture, natural remedies, homeopathy and massage.