



Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM): Hepatitis C elimination

The *Ontario Hepatitis C Elimination Roadmap* is charting the path to eliminate hepatitis C.

More than 110,000 Ontarians are living with hepatitis C, a leading cause of death and chronic illness from an infectious disease. However, with widespread testing, an effective cure and proven prevention strategies, eliminating hepatitis C is within reach. The *Roadmap* outlines strategies to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health threat in Ontario by 2030, including among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM).

Read the full *Ontario Hepatitis C Elimination Roadmap* at on.endhepc.ca.

The context of hepatitis C among gbMSM

GbMSM are being increasingly recognized as a priority population and require tailored hepatitis C interventions.

Nationally, it is estimated that nearly 4% of gbMSM have a current or past hepatitis C infection. Transmission can take place during sex, as well as through sharing drug equipment. Hepatitis C transmission during sex is not common but the risk increases when sex is combined with drug use; during condomless anal sex, group sex and sex where blood might be present; or when partner(s) have HIV or another sexually transmitted infection.

Hepatitis C prevention and care for gbMSM need to be integrated with HIV and sexual health services (including [HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis](#) or PrEP). Agencies serving gbMSM are trusted providers who can offer confidential, accessible and stigma-free hepatitis C services. This includes prevention in the context of “chemsex” or “[party n’ play](#)” (using drugs to facilitate or enhance sexual encounters).

How to address hepatitis C for gbMSM

- **Prioritize hepatitis C education and awareness** through sex-positive campaigns developed by gbMSM communities that can be integrated into messaging for sexual health and HIV.
- **Expand hepatitis C services offered to gbMSM**, including training sexual health and HIV clinics to begin treating hepatitis C and providing tailored harm reduction services.
- **Standardize hepatitis C testing whenever HIV testing is offered**, including during routine testing as part of PrEP and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) programs (in line with recommendations made in the Canadian guideline on HIV PrEP and nonoccupational PEP).