



Act now!



World Hepatitis Day 2016 WHO-EM/STD/184/E Design: YAT Communication

Hepatitis C can be cured

About hepatitis C

- Every year, around 400 000 people are infected with hepatitis C virus in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Of these people, 75–85% will develop chronic hepatitis.
- Around 16 million people in the Region currently have chronic hepatitis C.
- New medicines known as direct-acting antiviral (DAA) agents are available and can cure hepatitis C.
- An end to the suffering caused by chronic hepatitis is now within reach.

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Put hepatitis C medicines within everyone's reach



World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean



I want to be cured





Every patient has the right to be treated with DAAs

- According to the WHO's Constitution, "every individual has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health".
- This right is further reinforced in global conventions and treaties that state that intellectual property rights of patented products should not stand in the way of people's right to health.
- WHO added the new DAAs for treating hepatitis C to its Model List of Essential Medicines. This means that DAAs must be made available and affordable.
- Making DAAs accessible to all those who need treatment is everybody's responsibility. Governments, pharmaceutical companies, patients, people at risk and civil society organizations should work together to make DAAs accessible.



Role of people affected by hepatitis C and civil society organizations

People living with hepatitis C and those at risk, including health care providers, and their civil society supporters must take an active role with their governments in stepping up the demand for treatment. Through working together and taking the lead in demanding treatment, their right to the life-saving DAAs cannot be ignored.

What are DAAs?

- Direct-acting antiviral (DAAs) agents are new medicines that can cure hepatitis C. They are game changers in hepatitis C treatment and control because:
 - o they are taken orally
 - o they have fewer side-effects
 - o a treatment course can be completed within 12–24 weeks
 - o they can cure over 95% of cases.
- Previously available treatment for hepatitis C virus required injections over long periods, was limited in its effectiveness and caused severe side-effects. It was also very expensive.
- The price of DAAs may reach up to US\$ 84 000, which is prohibitively expensive both for individuals to afford and for governments to make available.



What influences the price of DAAs in countries?

- Pharmaceutical companies request patents for DAAs to gain the exclusive right (monopoly) to sell their product in a country.
- Governments study patent requests submitted by pharmaceutical companies carefully to avoid unnecessary monopolies on medicine.
- If the patent is not granted, governments can purchase generic versions of the DAA.
- Pharmaceutical companies provide differential prices according to income levels and burden of disease in countries.
- Governments negotiate prices with producers.
- Governments may enter into a voluntary license agreement with the company to produce DAAs locally.
- In public health emergencies, governments may issue a compulsory license and produce the DAAs locally.

