

# What you need to know about...



## Hepatitis C and Prison

### Why might you be interested?

- Hepatitis C (Hep C) treatment is now available in most prisons across Australia.
- You can go on treatment even if you are still injecting.
- The Hep C treatments are now easy, short (tablets only for 8-12 weeks) and most people have few or no side effects.
- Treatment is now more than 95% effective at curing Hep C. It is low cost for people who have a Medicare Card. Get a prescription from your GP now.
- Risk of Hep C transmission (as well as other blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections) still exists if you are injecting in prison or sharing equipment.
- Access to bleach/Fincol (cleaning agents) to help clean injecting equipment in prison is patchy across the country.
- There are still no Needle and Syringe Programs in Australian prisons (even though the National Strategies say that there should be).
- It can be challenging to make sure Hep C treatment continues uninterrupted when you go in and come out of prison. Below are some tips that might help:

### What do you need to do?

- If you are on Hep C treatment in the community and go inside before you finish treatment, it's important to tell the nurse on reception so they can make sure your treatment continues in prison. This may mean phoning someone from the outside and asking them to bring your medication to your prison.
- If you are on treatment in prison and released before finishing, make sure you tell the nurses so you can take the rest of your medication with you when you leave.
- If nothing has been done about organising your medication on the outside, you might need help to sort this when you get out (either phone your prison nurse or see a GP).

**The drug user organisation in your State or Territory can also help you if you have questions about Hep C treatment going into prison or on release.**