

# Bloodborne Infection - Hepatitis C

## Why Is This Important?

Hepatitis C is a virus transmitted through exposure to blood from an infected person. Common routes of infection include the sharing of injection drug equipment, tattoo & piercing equipment, and personal hygiene items like razors and toothbrushes. Some people with hepatitis C can clear the virus but most become chronic carriers of the virus and are at risk for developing liver damage or liver cancer.

Hepatitis C may have no signs and symptoms and therefore poses a risk for ongoing transmission.

Based on several equity measures a gap in hepatitis C infection rates persists within the Region's population. From 2004 to 2010, 66% of hepatitis C cases were reported in individuals living in the least advantaged areas of Saskatoon (see [Advancing Health Equity in Health Care – Hepatitis C](#)).

## What Is Being Done?

[What's Being Done In Saskatoon Health Region to Reduce STIs and Bloodborne Illness?](#)

## To Learn More:

[Destiny's Story \(YouTube\)](#): a personal story from a hepatitis C positive individual living in our Region.

Chief Medical Health Officer's 2014 [Call to Action](#)

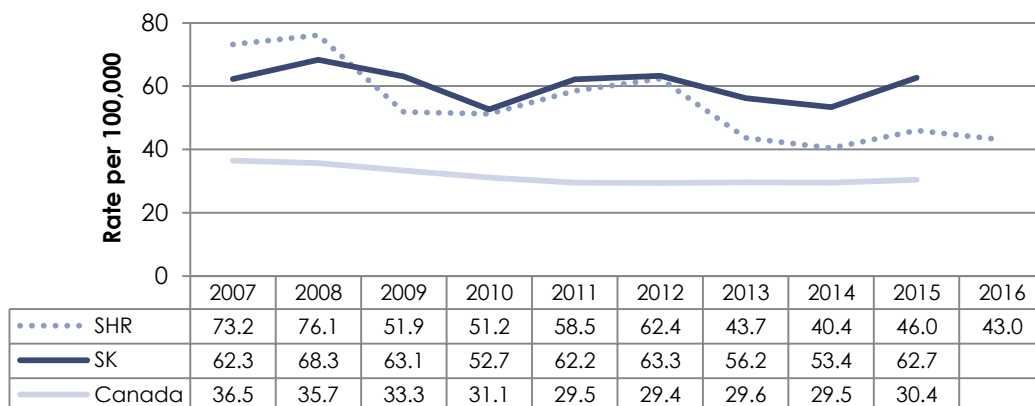
[Advancing Health Equity in Health Care - What is Health Equity?](#)

## Highlights

### Hepatitis C rates are declining but still high in the Region.

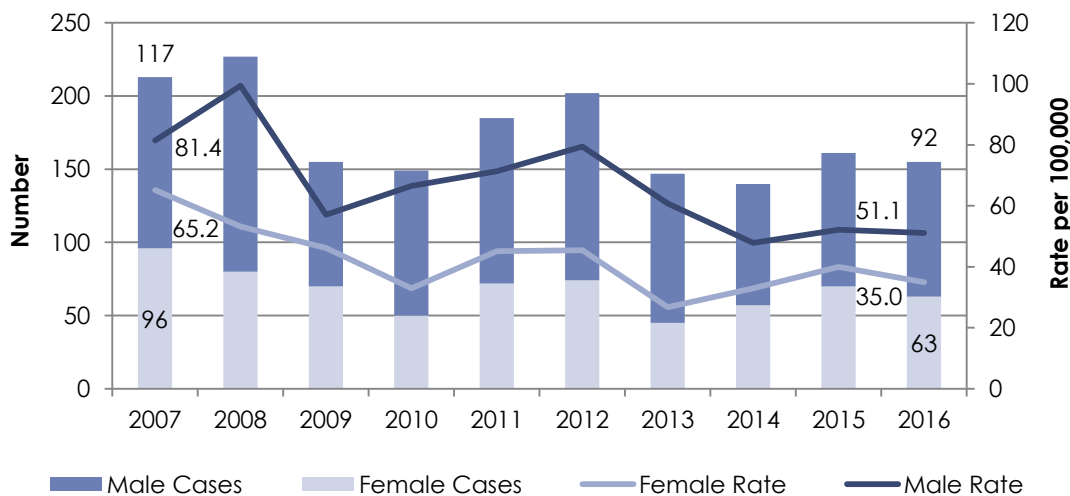
- Hepatitis C rates have steadily decreased in the Region but are still higher than national rates (*Figure 1*).
- In 2016, 155 cases of hepatitis C were reported, including 92 cases in males and 63 cases in females (*Figure 2*). Twenty-five cases were acute infections. At least 7% of all cases were co-infected with HIV (not shown).
- The Region's rate decreased by 7% from the previous year (*Figure 1*).
- Rates vary by age group with the highest rates occurring in young women 20 to 24 and adult men 30 to 39 years old. See [cases and rates by gender and age group](#).
- In 2016, 70% (106) of individuals with hepatitis C reported injection drug use as a transmission risk, an increase from 2016. See [transmission risk for hepatitis C](#).

**Figure 1: Hepatitis C Rates per 100,000 Population, Saskatoon Health Region, Saskatchewan, and Canada, 2007 to 2016**



Source: PHAC, Ministry of Health, iPHIS

**Figure 2: Hepatitis C Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Gender, Saskatoon Health Region, 2007 to 2016**



Source: iPHIS