

RafflesInternalMedicine

Hepatitis **C**

Treatment

Pegylated Interferon Package

RafflesHospital

585 North Bridge Road | Level 2 Raffles Hospital |
Singapore 188770

Tel: 6311 1788 | Appointment Hotline: 6311 1222 (24 hours)

www.raffleshospital.com | specialist@raffleshospital.com

What is Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is one of the five currently identified viral hepatitis - Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E - all of which can attack and damage the liver.

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) is spread primarily through contact with infected blood, and can cause cirrhosis (irreversible and potentially fatal liver scarring), liver cancer or liver failure. The disease is responsible for between 8,000 and 10,000 deaths yearly worldwide.

Presently, there is no vaccine or other means of preventing Hepatitis C infection.

Treatment for Chronic Hepatitis C

In most cases, HCV, once contracted, causes chronic Hepatitis C.

The most recent treatment for chronic Hepatitis C is a Combination Therapy combining a genetically engineered biological drug (Pegylated Interferon) with the drug Ribavirin. At present time, the optimal regimen is a 24 or 48 week course of a combination of Pegylated Interferon and Ribavirin depending on the genotype of HCV.

What is Interferon?

- A host protein made in response to viral infections and has natural antiviral activity.
- Pegylated Interferons can be given once weekly and provides a standard level of interferon as compared to standard interferons that must be given several times weekly and provides fluctuating levels.
- Pegylated Interferons are more active in inhibiting HCV and yield higher sustained response rates as compared to standard interferons.

Side effects of Interferon:

- Fatigue, and muscle aches
- Headaches, nausea and vomiting
- Skin irritation at the injection site
- Low-grade fever
- Weight loss
- Irritability and depression
- Mild bone marrow suppression
- Reversible hair loss

What is Ribavirin?

- Ribavirin is an oral antiviral agent that has activity against a broad range of viruses.
- By itself, Ribavirin has little effect on HCV but the sustained response rate increases by two - to three folds when combined with Interferon.
- Therefore, combination therapy is now recommended for Hepatitis C.

Side effects of Ribavirin:

- Anaemia
- Fatigue and irritability
- Itching and skin rash
- Nasal stuffiness
- Sinusitis and cough

Combined therapy of Pegylated Interferon and Ribavirin:

- Treatment of choice for Hepatitis C
- Leads to rapid improvements in liver function and disappearance of detectable HCV RNA in up to 70% of patients.
- Has shown sustained response rates of 40-80% for patients infected with HCV.
- Approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in children aged 3-17yrs.

** Pregnant women should not be treated with Interferon. Ribavirin causes birth defects and pregnancy should be avoided during treatment.*

At Raffles Hospital, we offer a 3-month package of Pegylated Interferon therapy that is customised to your individual needs. Make an appointment with our gastroenterologist who will prescribe the appropriate treatment for you after evaluating your condition.

Packages available:

Interferon Therapy (Type 2, 3)	\$7,126.20
Interferon Therapy <75kg (Other types)	\$7,350.90
Interferon Therapy >75kg (Other types)	\$7,573.45

Packages include 3 consultations with our Gastroenterologist. All prices include GST.

For more information or an appointment contact us at **6311 1200** or email internalmedcentre@rafflesmedical.com