

# Exciting New Options for the Treatment of Hepatitis C

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Recently, the FDA approved two new drugs for the treatment of hepatitis C. In April, telaprevir (Incivek) was approved, followed by approval for boceprevir (Victrelis) in May. Both drugs belong to the class of medicines called protease inhibitors. They specifically target an enzyme essential for the replication of the virus and are used in conjunction with the current standard of care, pegylated interferon and ribavirin.

In the United States, the most common variety of hepatitis C is genotype 1, which accounts for nearly 3/4 of cases. Standard therapy must be given for 48 weeks and is successful approximately 50% of the time: in certain groups, such as black men, this figure is closer to 30%. In data submitted to the FDA for both drugs, a chance of success increased to approximately 80% and was visible in all subgroups. Furthermore, in some cases it was possible to shorten treatment to 24 weeks.

*Note: Dr. Johanson is a member of the Florida Viral Hepatitis Council.*