

# HEPATITIS C



## Information on Getting Tested

### What to expect when getting tested for Hepatitis C

- The initial screening test is a blood test that looks for antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus. Sometimes this test is called a Hepatitis C Antibody Test.
- Ask when and how you will find out your results.
- The test results can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to come back.
- A new Rapid Antibody Test is now available in some clinics. These results can take 20 to 30 minutes to come back.

### What does the Hepatitis C Antibody Test mean?

#### If the test result is NON-REACTIVE/NEGATIVE

- A **non-reactive** or negative antibody test means that you are not currently infected with the Hepatitis C virus.
- However, if you have been recently exposed to the Hepatitis C virus, you will need to be tested again.

#### If the test result is REACTIVE/POSITIVE

- A **reactive** or positive antibody test means that you have been infected with the Hepatitis C virus at some point in time.
- Most people who get infected with the virus stay infected with Hepatitis C. This is known as chronic Hepatitis C.
- However, some people are able to get rid of, or “clear,” the virus without treatment.
- Once people have been infected, they will always have antibodies in their blood. This is true if they have cleared the virus or still have the virus in their blood.

### What to do if the Hepatitis C Antibody Test is reactive

- If the Hepatitis C Antibody Test is reactive, you need an additional, follow-up test to see if the Hepatitis C virus is currently in your blood.
- If the *additional blood test* is:
  - **Negative**—this means you were infected with Hepatitis C, but the virus has now been cleared from your body.
  - **Positive**—this means you are infected with Hepatitis C.
- If you have a **reactive** antibody test and a **positive** follow-up test, you need to talk to a doctor experienced in treating Hepatitis C.

### For more information

Talk to your health professional, call your health department, or visit [www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis](http://www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis).



U.S. Department of  
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