

Hepatitis C Testing Path

Hepatitis C testing is a two-stage process that begins with serological testing, usually requiring a blood sample.

Antibody test (Anti-HCV)

When the hepatitis C virus enters a person's bloodstream, it triggers an immune response and makes antibodies to the virus. Antibodies can be detected in the blood, usually within two or three months but sometimes up to six months or more after exposure to the virus. The Anti-HCV test detects the presence of antibodies to the hepatitis C virus.

HCV antibody positive (reactive)

You have at some time, been exposed to the hepatitis C virus.

HCV antibody Negative (non-reactive)

You have not been infected with hepatitis C. However, results may be negative in early acute hepatitis C and during the 'window period' or in people with weakened immune systems.



1/5 people will clear the virus without needing any treatment.*

Confirmatory test (HCV RNA)

Blood samples that are positive for hepatitis C antibody should automatically be tested for the presence of the hepatitis C virus. This test shows whether the virus is present in your blood or not.

Positive:

You have hepatitis C infection and you are at risk of developing serious liver disease.

Negative:

You have no virus present.

In these situations, and where a person has been exposed to risk of infection during the window period, ongoing monitoring and follow up testing should always be offered.

All people with a positive HCV RNA test should be offered a referral to a specialist service to have their liver health monitored and to discuss treatment options!



* Even if you have previously cleared the virus any future exposure to the virus could cause infection.