

Important Considerations

It is important that you consider how you would react if you learned that you had chronic viral hepatitis and whether this is the right time in your life for a test like this. Your counselor will help you review the advantages and disadvantages of taking a hepatitis test.

Advantages:

- You can make positive changes in behavior to lower your chances of getting infected or infecting someone else.
- You can learn if you need to be vaccinated for HAV and/or HBV.
- If you test positive for chronic HBV and/or HCV, you can seek medical care and learn how to take care of your health.

Disadvantages:

- You could receive confusing or inconclusive results and have to be tested again.
- You might become anxious or depressed about the results.
- A positive chronic HBV and/or HCV test result might affect your personal relationships and/or ability to get new individual life or health insurance.

Consent

I agree to confidential testing for HAV, HBV and HCV. My signature indicates that:

- I have read the above information and/or it has been explained to me.
- I understand the information that has been given to me about hepatitis and hepatitis testing.
- I have been given adequate opportunity to ask questions and that all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I will do my best to obtain my test results as scheduled.

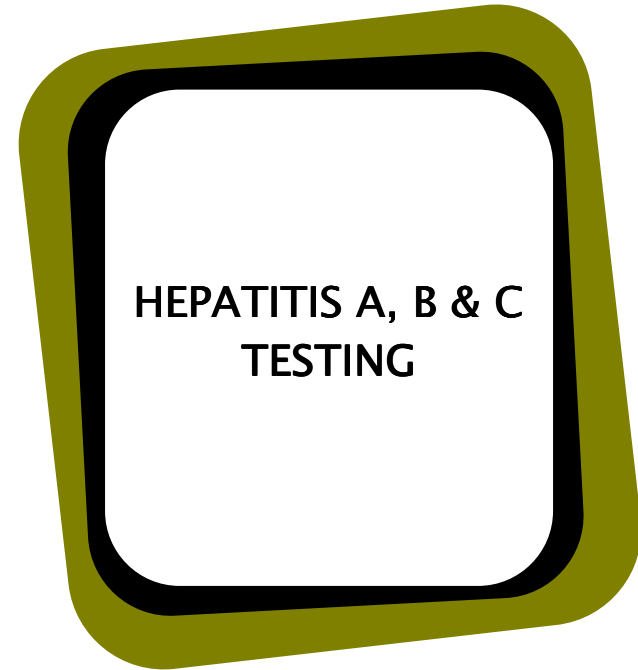
Print Name: _____

Sign Name: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Informed Consent



Hep-C ALERT

FROM THE STREETS TO THE SPECIALIST

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What is Viral Hepatitis?

Hepatitis means liver inflammation. Viral hepatitis means that a person has liver inflammation due to a virus. Viral infection of the liver makes the liver swell up and stop working well. The liver is an important organ. It helps your body digest food, store energy, and remove poisons. Several different viruses cause hepatitis. They are called Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Viral hepatitis infection can be acute (short-term) or chronic (lifetime). Chronic hepatitis can cause severe liver damage and liver cancer. Many people do not feel sick when they are first infected with a hepatitis virus and may never know that anything is wrong.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A Virus (HAV) is spread by eating food or drinking water contaminated with feces, or the bowel movement (BM) from a person infected with the Hepatitis A Virus. It can also be caused by anal-oral contact. Adults who become infected with HAV usually have bad symptoms for several weeks. Almost everyone who gets infected will recover and become immune to being infected again. There is a vaccine to prevent Hepatitis A. People who travel to areas with poor sanitation, illicit drug users, men who have sex with men, and people with liver disease should be vaccinated.

Hepatitis B

The Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) is spread through contact with infected blood, through sex with an infected person, and from mother to child during childbirth. It is the most common hepatitis virus. Most adults who become infected will recover from HBV after a few months and become immune to being infected again. Others are not able to get rid of the virus and stay infected for life. Chronic HBV often leads to a scarring of the liver, called cirrhosis (sir-o-sis) and liver cancer. Up to 9 out of 10 babies born to infected mothers end up with chronic HBV and can become very sick. There is a vaccine to prevent Hepatitis B. All children should be vaccinated. People who are exposed to blood and/or body fluids through sexual, household or occupational contact, illicit drug users, as well as people with HIV or liver disease, should be vaccinated also.

"Hepatitis A and B can be prevented with a vaccine"

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) is spread mostly from contact with infected blood, such as a blood transfusion (before 1992), kidney dialysis, or through injecting drug use. It is rarely sexually transmitted, although sex with multiple partners or a history of sexually transmitted diseases can put people at risk for it. The virus can enter the body through minor cuts or scrapes by razors, toothbrushes or on needles used for tattooing, body piercing or on materials used to snort drugs. About a quarter of people who become infected are able to get rid of HCV from their bodies within six months. Unlike the other hepatitis viruses, recovering from HCV does not provide immunity from being infected again. Most people go on to develop chronic HCV, a silent and progressive disease that can lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer. More often than not, people with HCV don't have symptoms, which is why testing is so important. There is treatment for HCV. It works best before severe liver damage has occurred. **There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C.**

"The only way to know if you have chronic HBV or HCV is to get tested"

Getting Tested

The only way to find out your viral hepatitis status is to get a blood test. A sample of blood will be collected from a vein in your arm and tested for HAV, HBV and HCV. The test result is confidential. Your counselor will give you a follow-up appointment (usually 2 – 3 weeks) to get your results. Test results are either negative, indeterminate (which means neither positive nor negative), or positive. If you test positive for acute or chronic viral hepatitis, you will need to see a doctor for additional testing and medical follow-up.

Blood Test Name	What the Result Shows
Hepatitis B Surface Antigen "Hepatitis BsAg"	If Positive: Acute or chronic infection
Hepatitis B Surface Antibody "Hepatitis BsAb"	If Positive: Immune due to past infection or vaccination
Hepatitis B Core Antibody "Hepatitis BcAb"	If Positive: Acute or chronic infection – OR - If paired with a positive Hepatitis BsAb result, immune due to past infection
Hepatitis A Antibody "Anti-HAV"	If Positive: Immune due to past infection or vaccination
Hepatitis C Antibody "Anti-HCV"	If Positive: Past or present infection
Hepatitis C PCR (confirmatory)	If Positive: Acute or chronic infection