

Hepatitis C Testing

Getting tested for hepatitis C or hep C is the only way to know if you have hep C. It's estimated that over 100,000 New Yorkers are living with hep C, but most don't even know it. Take time and get tested.

If you know you have hep C, the sooner you can start treatment, get cured, and prevent liver damage.

How is hepatitis C diagnosed?

Two tests are needed to determine if you have hep C: 1) the hep C antibody test; and 2) the hep C RNA test. Your health care provider may perform both tests from one blood sample.

Hepatitis C antibody test

The first test is the hep C antibody test, which looks for antibodies to the virus in your blood. These are your body's attempt to fight off the hep C virus. If you have them, then at some point you were infected with hep C. The hep C antibody test can be done by collecting a blood sample and sending it to a laboratory, or by a fingerstick using a hep C rapid antibody test. A hep C antibody test result can either be non-reactive (negative) or reactive (positive).

- A non-reactive or negative antibody test means that you are not currently infected with the hep C virus. However, if you have engaged in risky behavior such as sharing injection drug equipment in the last 6 months, you will need to be tested again.
- A reactive or positive antibody test means that you have antibodies to hep C in your blood. This means that you were exposed to hep C at one time. It does not always mean that you still have hep C. A second test is needed to know if hep C is active in your body right now. Once you have a reactive antibody test, future antibody tests will always come back reactive.

Hepatitis C RNA test

The second test is called a hep C RNA test. It checks to see if the hep C virus is in your blood. A hep C RNA test result can be either undetectable (negative) or detectable (positive).

- An undetectable or negative RNA test result means you do not have hep C. Your body has cleared the infection on its own or you were successfully treated and cured. This does not mean that you cannot get hep C again. If you engage in high risk activities, be sure to get tested again in 6 months.
- A detectable or positive RNA test result means that you have hep C. You should talk to your health care provider about treatment for hep C.

Who should get tested for hepatitis C?

All adults, pregnant persons, and people with risk factors should get tested for hepatitis C. Talk to your health care provider about getting tested.

You should be tested for hepatitis C, if you:

- Are 18 years of age or older
- Are pregnant
- Injected drugs, even just once many years ago
- Have HIV
- Received donated blood or organs before 1992
- Received clotting factor before 1987
- Got a tattoo or body piercing from an unlicensed artist, such as on the street or while in jail
- Were exposed to blood on the job through a needlestick or injury with a sharp object
- Were ever on long-term dialysis
- Snorted drugs

Where can you get tested for hepatitis C?

For testing locations in New York State go to:

https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/hepatitis/hepatitis_c/providers/testing_locations.htm



Help NY eliminate
HEP C
Get tested. Get treated. Get cured.

health.ny.gov/nycureshepc



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