



# Understanding Your Hepatitis C Test Results

**PLEASE NOTE:** This information in this document is not intended as medical advice. Talk to your healthcare provider to obtain a copy of your results and for a full explanation of what they mean.

## Hepatitis C Antibody Test

A hepatitis C antibody test tests for previous exposure to hepatitis C. The test looks for antibodies to hepatitis C in your blood. Antibodies are your body's response to the presence of the hepatitis C virus. They are like footprints. They let us know the virus was in your body, but do not tell us if the virus is still there. The antibodies are only found in your blood if you have ever had a hepatitis C infection. Below is a chart with an explanation of the most common results, but other results can occur.

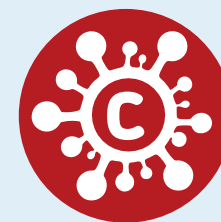


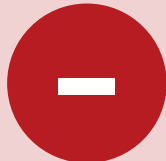

Result	What Your Results Mean	What You Need to Do
<b>Non-reactive or negative</b> 	<b>You do not have a current hepatitis C infection.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You were previously exposed to hepatitis C, but your body fought off the infection.</li><li>You do not have a hepatitis C infection and do not need treatment.</li><li>If you were exposed within the last 3 to 6 months, your result could be negative because your body has not had enough time to make antibodies to the virus.</li></ul>	<b>Protect yourself from hepatitis C.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Avoid sharing injection drug equipment (like needles, syringes, cookers, or cottons), equipment used for smoking or snorting drugs, or personal items that may contain blood (like razors, nail clippers, or toothbrushes).</li><li>Practice safer sex. Hepatitis C is more likely to spread through unprotected or rougher sex, sex with multiple partners, or if you have HIV or another STI.</li></ul> <b>Get re-tested if you have continued exposure risk.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If you have HIV, take PrEP, or inject (drugs, hormones, silicone, or vitamins), get tested routinely (every 6 months to a year).</li></ul>
<b>Reactive or positive</b> 	<b>You have had hepatitis C at some point in your life and may have a current infection.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your body was exposed to the virus and made antibodies.</li><li>You need additional testing to determine if you have a current hepatitis C infection.</li></ul>	<b>Follow up with your healthcare provider about the next steps.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You need a test to confirm that you have the hepatitis C virus in your body. Most people who have a reactive antibody result will have the virus and need treatment.</li></ul> <b>Protect others from hepatitis C.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Avoid sharing injection equipment (like needles, syringes, cookers, or cottons) or personal items that may contain blood (like razors, nail clippers, or toothbrushes).</li><li>Practice safer sex. Hepatitis C is more likely to spread through unprotected or rougher sex, sex with multiple partners, or if someone has HIV or another STI.</li></ul>

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## Hepatitis C Confirmatory Test Results

A hepatitis C confirmatory test (sometimes written as HCV RNA PCR) is used to find out if you have a current hepatitis C infection. People who have a reactive or positive hepatitis C antibody test should get a confirmatory test to know if the virus is currently in their body. The HCV confirmatory test looks for the virus in your blood. Below is a chart with an explanation of the most common results, but other results can occur.



Result	What Your Results Mean	What You Need to Do
<p><b>Not detected or negative</b></p> 	<p><b>You do not have a current hepatitis C infection.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you were previously exposed to hepatitis C, your body fought off the infection.</li> <li>You do not have a hepatitis C infection and do not need treatment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Protect yourself from hepatitis C.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid sharing injection drug equipment (like needles, syringes, cookers, or cottons), equipment used for smoking or snorting drugs, or personal items that may contain blood (like razors, nail clippers, or toothbrushes).</li> <li>Practice safer sex. Hepatitis C is more likely to spread through unprotected or rougher sex, sex with multiple partners, or if you have HIV or another STI.</li> </ul> <p><b>Get re-tested if you have continued exposure risk.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you have HIV, take PrEP, or inject (drugs, hormones, silicone, or vitamins), get tested routinely (every 6 months to a year).</li> <li>You will always have hepatitis C antibodies and test positive on an HCV antibody test. Repeat hepatitis C confirmatory testing in the future to check for hepatitis C.</li> <li>Get tested during every pregnancy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Detected or positive</b></p> 	<p><b>You have a current hepatitis C infection.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You currently have hepatitis C in your blood. You are infectious, meaning you can spread the virus to other people.</li> <li>Your results may include a viral load, which measures how much virus is in your blood.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Seek medical care and treatment for hepatitis C.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HCV can cause liver disease, cancer, and even death. Talk to your healthcare provider about what these results mean and how to start treatment for HCV.</li> <li>HCV treatment involves taking oral medication for 8-12 weeks. It cures most people completely with few side effects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Protect others from hepatitis C.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid sharing injection drug equipment (like needles, syringes, cookers, or cottons), equipment used for smoking or snorting drugs, or personal items that may contain blood (like razors, nail clippers, or toothbrushes).</li> <li>Practice safer sex. Hepatitis C is more likely to spread through unprotected or rougher sex, sex with multiple partners, or if someone has HIV or another STI.</li> </ul>



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