Hepatitis C Antibody Test results

When getting tested for Hepatitis C, be sure to ask when and how test results will be given to you. The test results usually take anywhere from 20 minutes to a few weeks to come back.

What do the results mean?

Non-reactive or a Negative Hepatitis C Antibody Test

- A **non-reactive**, or negative, antibody test means that a person does not have Hepatitis C.
- However, if a person has been recently exposed to the Hepatitis C virus, he or she will need to be tested again.

Reactive or a Positive Hepatitis C Antibody Test

- A **reactive**, or positive, antibody test means that Hepatitis C antibodies were found in the blood and a person has been infected with the Hepatitis C virus at some point in time.
- A reactive antibody test **does not** necessarily mean a person still has Hepatitis C.
- Once people have been infected, they will always have antibodies in their blood. This is true if even if they have cleared the Hepatitis C virus.
- A reactive antibody test requires an additional, follow-up test to see if a person is currently infected with Hepatitis C. It is important that you ask for this follow-up test.

For more information

Talk to a health professional at your local clinic! Or visit www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis

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HEPATITIS C

TEST, TREAT, CURE

Why should you get tested for Hepatitis C?

Most people with Hepatitis C do not have any symptoms and do not know they are infected. Chronic Hepatitis C is a serious disease that can result in long-term health problems, including liver damage, liver failure, liver cancer, or even death. Hepatitis C can be in your body for many years with no symptoms.

- Baby boomers (born between 1945-1965) are five times more likely to have Hepatitis C.
- The longer people live with Hepatitis C, the more likely they are to develop serious, life-threatening liver disease.
- Getting tested can help people learn if they are infected and get them into lifesaving care and treatment.

It is estimated that 2.7-3.9 million people in the United States have chronic hepatitis C

Why do baby boomers have such high rates of Hepatitis C?

The reason baby boomers have high rates of Hepatitis C is not completely understood. It is believed most boomers became infected in the 1970s and 1980s when rates of Hepatitis C were very high. Since people with Hepatitis C can live for decades without symptoms, many baby boomers are living with an infection they got many years ago.

Hepatitis C is mostly spread through contact with blood from an infected person. Many baby boomers could have been infected from contaminated blood and blood products before widespread screening of the blood supply began in 1992. Others may have become infected from injecting drugs, even if only once in the past. Still, many baby boomers with Hepatitis C do not know how or when they were infected.

What should you know about Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C (HCV for short) is a serious liver disease that results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus. Some people who get infected with Hepatitis C are able to get rid of the virus, but most people who get infected develop a lifelong infection. Over time, chronic Hepatitis C can cause serious health problems including liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer and even death. In fact, Hepatitis C is a leading cause of liver cancer and the leading cause of liver transplants. The good news: Hepatitis C is a preventable and curable disease.

People with Hepatitis C:

- Often have no symptoms
- Can live with an infection for decades without feeling sick
- Can usually be successfully treated with medications

How would you know if you have Hepatitis C?

The only way to know if someone has Hepatitis C is to get tested. Doctors use a blood test to find out if a person has ever been infected with Hepatitis C.