

## VIRUS TEST(S)

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Virus Present: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Viral Load: \_\_\_\_\_

## GENOTYPE

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Genotype: \_\_\_\_\_

## BIOPSY

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Stage: \_\_\_\_\_ (out of \_\_\_\_\_)

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ (out of \_\_\_\_\_)

## 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO KEEP YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES HEALTHY

1. See your medical provider on a regular basis and, if you are pregnant, seek prenatal care.
2. Avoid alcohol. As little as one drink can cause more liver damage.
3. If you inject drugs, do not share needles or equipment like cotton, cookers, water, and syringes. Call 311 to learn how to obtain clean needles and works from syringe exchange programs or pharmacies in your neighborhood.
4. For help with an alcohol or drug problem, or to find a support group for people living with hepatitis C, call 311 or 1-800-LIFENET (1-800-543-3638).
5. Get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B. (Getting infected with another hepatitis virus can worsen liver damage.)
6. Get tested for HIV.
7. Practice safer sex. Use condoms to protect yourself and others.
8. Do not share toothbrushes, razors, or other personal items that might contain small amounts of blood.
9. To keep your liver healthy, eat a nutritious diet and maintain a healthy weight.
10. Ask your provider which over-the-counter (OTC) medications are safe for your liver.

## LIVING WITH HEPATITIS C

*Hepatitis C is a serious but manageable liver disease. Working closely with your medical provider and taking care of your health now, will help you live a long and healthy life.*

Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_



Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor  
Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH,  
Commissioner

NYC.GOV/HEALTH

**CALL  
311**

## HEPATITIS C: HOW TO STAY HEALTHY AND INFORMED

THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

## WHAT DOES A POSITIVE ANTIBODY TEST MEAN?

The first test people usually get for hepatitis C is an antibody test. Your body makes antibodies to fight germs. If your test is positive, it means you have been infected with the hepatitis C virus. Other tests are necessary to see:

- If you still have the virus in your body.
- What type of hepatitis C virus you have (genotype).
- The condition of your liver.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT NEXT TEST: THE VIRUS TEST

There are 2 types of virus tests. One tells you if the virus is still in your body; the other type tells you *how much* virus is in your body (viral load). Your provider will decide which virus test to order.

## IF YOUR VIRUS TEST IS NEGATIVE

This usually means that your body has cleared the virus on its own, and that you should:

- Get another test in 6 months to confirm that there is still no virus in your body.
- Take measures to protect yourself from getting infected in the future.

## IF YOUR VIRUS TEST IS POSITIVE

This means the hepatitis C virus is still in your body, and you could:

- Develop liver damage over time.
- Pass the virus on to others through blood-to-blood contact.
- Be a candidate for treatment.

Treatment for hepatitis C consists of two medications taken together (interferon and ribavirin), and can improve the health of your liver.

To make treatment recommendations, your provider will need to order more tests to assess the condition of your liver.

## OTHER TESTS YOU MAY NEED

### GENOTYPE

Genotype is the type of hepatitis C virus you have. It is important to know your genotype because different types of hepatitis C respond differently to treatment.

### LIVER ENZYME TEST

If your liver is inflamed, it may release chemicals called liver enzymes. Because you can have significant liver disease even when your liver enzymes are normal, providers often use additional tests to get the best picture of your liver health.

### LIVER BIOPSY

A liver biopsy involves using a thin needle to remove a tiny piece of your liver. It is the best way to tell exactly how much damage has been done to your liver.

### ULTRASOUND

An ultrasound takes pictures that tell you the size and texture of your liver, and if you have tumors in your liver or fluid in your belly.

### VIRAL LOAD

The amount of virus does not always coincide with the amount of liver damage. This test helps your provider decide how you might respond to treatment and is used to monitor your progress on treatment.