

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 a few days 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 will need to be followed up with a HCV RNA test to see if a person is currently infected with Hepatitis C. Your provider will let you know if this testing is done.

For more information

Talk to a primary care provider or contact the ANTHC Liver Disease and Hepatitis Program at 907-729-1560 or 1-800-665-4837.

Visit us online at: www.anthc.org/hep



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A large graphic on the right side of the page. It consists of a teal rectangular box with white text. The text reads "HEPATITIS C" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below it is a horizontal line of dots. Underneath the dots, the text "WHY BABY BOOMERS SHOULD GET TESTED" is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. The background of the entire page is a grayscale image of a traditional Alaskan Totem pole with intricate carvings of figures and animals.

Why should baby boomers get tested for Hepatitis C?

While anyone can get Hepatitis C, more than 75% of adults infected are baby boomers, people born from 1945 through 1965. Hepatitis C can be in your body for many years with no symptoms. Most people with Hepatitis C do not know they are infected.

- Baby boomers 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 recommended that anyone born from 1945 through 1965 get tested for 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 baby boomers know about Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C 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.

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 someone know they 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.

