HEPATITIS C

Information on Getting Tested

KNOW MORE HEPATITIS™

What to expect when getting tested for Hepatitis C

- The initial screening test is a blood test that looks for antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus. Sometimes this test is called a Hepatitis C Antibody Test.
- Ask when and how you will find out your results.
- The test results can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to come back.
- A new Rapid Antibody Test is now available in some clinics. These results can take 20 to 30 minutes to come back.

What does the Hepatitis C Antibody Test mean?

If the test result is NON-REACTIVE/NEGATIVE

- A **non-reactive** or negative antibody test means that you are not currently infected with the Hepatitis C virus.
- However, if you have been recently exposed to the Hepatitis C virus, you will need to be tested again.

If the test result is REACTIVE/POSITIVE

- A **reactive** or positive antibody test means that you have been infected with the Hepatitis C virus at some point in time.
- Most people who get infected with the virus stay infected with Hepatitis C. This is known as chronic Hepatitis C.
- However, some people are able to get rid of, or "clear," the virus without treatment.
- Once people have been infected, they will always have antibodies in their blood. This is true if they have cleared the virus or still have the virus in their blood.

What to do if the Hepatitis C Antibody Test is reactive

- If the Hepatitis C Antibody Test is reactive, you need an additional, follow-up test to see if the Hepatitis C virus is currently in your blood.
- If the *additional blood test* is:

  Negative—this means you were infected with Hepatitis C, but the virus has now been cleared from your body.

  Positive—this means you are infected with Hepatitis C.
- If you have a **reactive** antibody test and a **positive** follow-up test, you need to talk to a doctor experienced in treating Hepatitis C.

For more information

Talk to your health professional, call your health department, or visit www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis

May 2012