

Testing: Hepatitis C

The only way to know if a person has hepatitis C is by having a blood test.

1. Antibody test

This will show if a person has ever been exposed to the virus. It does not mean they currently have hepatitis C. It is important to get the second test if this antibody test is positive.

IMPORTANT: It is important to know that a positive antibody test does not mean you are protected against (immune to) hepatitis C. There is no vaccination to prevent hepatitis C and you can get hepatitis C more than once.

2. Test for the virus (PCR test)

The PCR looks for the virus and is used to identify whether a person currently has hepatitis C

These tests are usually ordered and done at the same time. Specialised drug and alcohol services are very experienced doing blood tests and may have tools to improve the chances a blood test will be successful if this has been difficult in the past.

FibroScan

This is a special ultrasound that estimates how much damage a liver has. Sometimes it is needed before getting treatment and the treating doctor will be able to advise on where to get this done. It is a quick, easy and pain free procedure.