

SCREEN

Patient discussion considerations

Before screening for HCV antibodies

Explain the screening test

Let your patient know that this is a simple blood test to detect HCV antibodies. Explain when the results are expected and how the patient will be informed.

Educate the patient about HCV

Explain that HCV is a virus that spreads from an infected person through contaminated blood and targets the liver. Make it clear that HCV is a serious condition that can lead to liver complications. It is also curable.

Explain the often-asymptomatic nature of HCV

Tell your patient that HCV patients may not feel sick, even while the virus is damaging the liver.

Tell the patient why he/she should be screened

If the patient is a baby boomer, born between 1945 and 1965, talk about the higher prevalence within this population that prompted the screening recommendations. Explain that wider testing is needed to find unidentified HCV patients. Tell the patient that there are other risk factors that create a need for HCV screening.

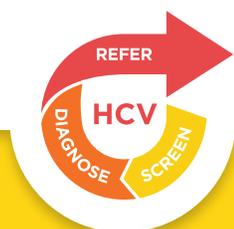
After screening for antibodies

⊖ If the result is negative

Let your patient know that it is highly unlikely he/she has been exposed to HCV and no further action will be needed. However, if exposure is suspected in the past 6 months, consider re-testing for HCV antibodies or running an HCV RNA test.

⊕ If the result is positive

Your patient has been exposed to HCV. Explain that not everyone who is exposed to HCV becomes chronically infected, so another test will be required to confirm the diagnosis. Inform your patient as to whether you or an HCV treatment provider will be ordering this test.



DIAGNOSE

Patient discussion considerations

Before testing for HCV RNA

Explain why this test is necessary

Let your patient know that not everyone who tests positive for HCV antibodies is chronically infected. A second test is required to confirm an ongoing infection.

Explain the diagnostic test

Tell your patient that this is a simple blood test to look for HCV RNA or active virus. Like other tests, it will require a small amount of blood to be drawn and sent to a lab for testing.

After testing for HCV RNA

⊖ If the result is negative

Tell your patient that he/she is not chronically infected and no further testing or treatment is needed. Because these patients have been exposed to HCV, make sure they understand how the virus is spread and the situations in which they could be exposed.

⊕ If the result is positive

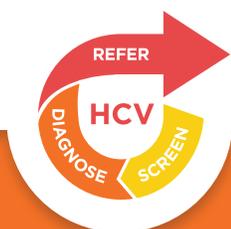
Tell your patient that he/she is infected with HCV and will be referred to an HCV treatment provider for more tests and possible treatment. Explain that HCV is a progressive disease that can lead to serious complications. Emphasize that HCV can be curable and treatment options are available.

Advise your patient how to prevent further liver damage

- Explain the importance of limiting or abstaining from alcohol, as excess alcohol can promote the development of fibrosis and even liver cancer¹
- If your patient is overweight, stress the importance of losing weight through diet and exercise. Obese patients are prone to have nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, which is a risk factor for fibrosis progression in HCV patients¹

Explain how to limit the risk of HCV transmission

- Tell your HCV patients to prevent anyone from coming into contact with their blood. They should avoid sharing dental or shaving utensils and cover any bleeding wound immediately
- If your patient uses illicit drugs, stress the importance of living a drug-free life. Refer him/her to substance abuse treatment if necessary



1. AASLD, IDSA, IAS-USA. Recommendations for testing, managing, and treating hepatitis C. <http://www.hcvguidelines.org>. Accessed September 21, 2017.