



HEPATITIS C VIRUS PRE- AND POST-TEST CHECKLISTS

Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) pre- and post-test discussions can significantly affect how the client responds to testing and test results. When individualized to a client's needs and context, these discussions provide important preventive and health promotion information, enable better disease management, and encourage continued engagement with health and social care.

HCV Antibody Pre-test Discussion Checklist

- Discuss the reasons for the HCV test (client or provider initiated), such as modes of transmission
- Discuss impact of possible positive result for client and others, including transmission prevention, and confidentiality and disclosure issues
- Provide information about the testing process, including:
 - an explanation of the HCV antibody test, including window period and the need for HCV RNA test (HCV-PCR) if the antibody test is positive
 - the time it takes for results to become available
- Waiting for test results can be challenging. Discuss supports the client might need to access during the waiting period
- Explain that Public Health receives positive test results and may contact client
- Discuss a follow-up plan to obtain results and vaccines available for those at-risk/infected
- Check the client's understanding of the information provided
- Confirm if the client is now ready to proceed with testing

HCV Antibody Post-test Discussion Checklists

HCV Antibody Test

Negative

- Explain the meaning of a negative test result and confirm client understanding
- Discuss indications for further testing, considering window periods, ongoing risk behaviours, or being immune compromised. Make a follow-up plan, if applicable
- For those at-risk, explore resources needed such as education, harm reduction, vaccines, social and other resources, as appropriate
- Make referrals and encourage engagement with health care and other support services, as needed

Positive

- Receiving a diagnosis of HCV is complex and can be life changing. It is important to convey the test results and relevant information in a positive and culturally sensitive way that encourages engagement and facilitates follow-up planning with the client.*
- Explain the meaning of a positive test result (i.e., the client has been exposed to hepatitis C)
 - Provide time for the client to process the result and confirm client's understanding
 - Explain the need for an HCV RNA test to determine if the viral infection is still active
 - Discuss potential for stigma and that disclosure is voluntary
 - Discuss modes of transmission, harm reduction, vaccines, social and other resources, as appropriate
 - Make a follow-up plan and make referrals to other health care and support services, as appropriate



HCV RNA Post-test Discussion Checklists

HCV RNA Test

Negative

- Explain the meaning of a negative test (i.e., the client has cleared the virus and is no longer infected)
- Explain the need for a repeat test to rule out a false negative test result
- Discuss risks for re-infection
- Discuss any difficulties/issues the client may have in practicing safer behaviours, if appropriate
- Explore resources needed such as education, harm reduction, vaccines, or others
- Make referrals and encourage engagement with health care and other support services, as needed
- Check the client's understanding of the information provided

Positive

- Explain the meaning of a positive test (active HCV infection)
- Explain the need for a repeat RNA test to rule out a false positive result
- If you suspect a newly acquired infection, discuss the need for another HCV RNA test in about six months to check if the infection is ongoing
- Provide time for the client to process the result and confirm that they understand the result
- Discuss modes of transmission, transmission prevention, lack of immunity against other HCV genotypes, and notifying contacts at-risk
- Explain that HCV is a chronic disease that progresses slowly and treatments are available
- Explain the impact of alcohol and other substances on the progression of liver disease
- Discuss the potential for stigma and that disclosure is voluntary
- Discuss healthy lifestyles (diet, exercise) and harm reduction (e.g., safer behaviours and any difficulties that the person may have in practicing safer behaviours)
- Explore resources needed, such as HCV education or harm reduction resources
- Determine the need for vaccines (e.g., hepatitis A and B, pneumococcal, and influenza)
- Discuss the need for regular monitoring to check for liver disease progression and for self-management support
- Make a follow-up plan and make referrals to other health care and support services, as appropriate



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