

Hepatitis C Virus Pre- and Post-Test Checklists

Confidential hepatitis C Virus (HCV) pre- and post-test discussions can significantly affect how the client responds to testing and test results. When **using simple language** and individualized to a client's needs, 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

- O Discuss the reasons for the HCV test (client or provider initiated), such as modes of transmission.
- 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.
- Explain that Public Health receives positive test results and may contact client.

- Discuss impact of possible positive result for client and others, including transmission prevention, and confidentiality and disclosure issues.
- Waiting for test results can be challenging.
 Discuss supports the client might need to access during the waiting period.
- O 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

Negative

HCV Antibody Test

Positive

- Explain the meaning of a negative test result and confirm client understanding.
- O 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.
- Explain the meaning of a positive test result (i.e., the client has been exposed to hepatitis C).

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 safe way that encourages engagement and facilitates follow-up planning with the client.

- 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.
- O Discuss potential for stigma and that **disclosure** is voluntary.
- O Discuss modes of transmission, harm reduction, vaccines, social and other resources, as appropriate.
- Make a follow-up plan, make referrals, and encourage engagement with other health care and support services, as needed.

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.
- O 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.

- 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.

O Discuss the potential for stigma and that **disclosure** is **voluntary**.

Positive

- O 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.
- O Determine the need for vaccines (e.g., hepatitis A and B, pneumococcal, and influenza).
- O 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.
- Ask the client about other supports, such as family, friends, community, traditional and spiritual (e.g., spiritual leaders, sweats, ceremonies).

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