

STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
Health AND **Human**
SERVICES

Hepatitis Prevention Program
Viral Hepatitis Prevention & Testing Services Manual

DECEMBER, 2023

PURPOSE

The purpose of the viral hepatitis program is to distribute information, offer hepatitis C testing, and offer hepatitis A and B vaccinations to Iowans who are at an increased risk of viral hepatitis exposure. This manual is intended to provide recommendations and best practices for Iowa providers and contracted agencies related to prevention and screening for viral hepatitis. Questions related to the content of this document and requests for technical assistance may be directed to the HIV and Hepatitis Prevention Program at HIVHCVPrevention@idph.iowa.gov.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

The HIV and Hepatitis Prevention Program provides educational materials related to viral hepatitis through the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of HIV, STI, and Hepatitis Materials Order Form. Materials are available at no-cost and may be requested by any interested provider, agency, or community organization.

[Access the materials order form.](#)

CLINICAL HEPATITIS C SCREENING GUIDELINES

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recommends screening for hepatitis C as follows:¹

Universal hepatitis C screening is recommended for the following situations:

- At least once in a lifetime for all adults aged 18 and older; and
- During each pregnancy for expectant mothers.

One-time hepatitis C screening regardless of age is recommended for the following populations:

- People living with HIV;
- People who ever injected drugs and shared needles, syringes, or other drug preparation equipment, including those who injected once or a few times many years ago;
- People with selected medical conditions, including:
 - People who ever received maintenance hemodialysis, and
 - People with persistently abnormal ALT levels;
- Prior recipients of transfusions or organ transplants including:
 - People who received clotting factor concentrates produced before 1987;
 - People who received a transfusion of blood or blood components before July 1992;
 - People who received an organ transplant prior to July 1992;

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/guidelinesc.htm>

- People who were notified that they received blood from a donor who later tested positive for HCV;
- Health care, emergency medical, and public safety personnel after needle sticks, sharps, or mucosal exposure to HCV; and
- Children born to mothers with HCV infection.

Routine periodic testing is recommended for people with ongoing risk factors, while risk factors persist, including:

- People who currently inject drugs and share needles, syringes, or other drug preparation equipment; and
- People who are receiving maintenance hemodialysis.

Any person who requests hepatitis C testing should receive it, regardless of disclosure of risk, because many persons may be reluctant to disclose stigmatizing risks.

PROGRAM-PRIORITIZED HEPATITIS C SCREENING GUIDELINE

Agencies contracted by Iowa HHS to provide Integrated Testing or Community Based Screening Services are authorized by the program to provide prioritized hepatitis C screening services to the following populations in accordance with established program policies and procedures:

- People who have ever used injection drugs;
- People who have ever shared injection drug equipment;
- People who have no history of injection drug use born between 1945 – 1965 (baby boomers) who have not previously been screened for hepatitis C and are primarily presenting for additional screening services.

Individuals who meet these eligibility criteria can locate testing services using the [testing locator](#).

COUNSELING FOR INDIVIDUALS TESTING POSITIVE FOR HEPATITIS C

Individuals who test positive for hepatitis C should be counseled on strategies to reduce the risk of transmitting hepatitis C to others, including:

- Cover cuts and sores on the skin;
- Refrain from donating blood, organs, tissue, or semen;
- Refrain from sharing any drug-use supplies;
- Refrain from sharing toothbrushes;
- Refrain from sharing razors; and
- Refrain from sharing other personal care items that may come into contact with blood.

Individuals who test positive for hepatitis C should also be counseled on strategies to reduce the risk of potential liver damage until they can consult with a medical provider for further evaluation, including:

- Avoid alcohol;
- Refrain from starting new medications; and
- Refrain from over-the-counter herbal supplements and medications.

HEPATITIS C CASE REPORTING

Patients with the following laboratory results should be reported to Iowa HHS:

- Screening tests:
 - Anti-HCV when positive or reactive.
- Confirmatory tests:
 - HCV RNA, NAT, or PCR when positive or reactive;
 - HCV RNA, NAT, or PCR when negative or not detected; and
 - Genotyping when detected or not detected.

Reports can be made by providers to Iowa HHS by completing and returning the [Iowa Disease Reporting Card](#). Questions related to reporting can be directed to Iowa HHS at 515-281-5027.

HEPATITIS C MEDICAL FOLLOW-UP & TREATMENT OPTIONS

Hepatitis C can be cured with appropriate treatment. Iowa HHS maintains a [Directory of Facilities Treating Viral Hepatitis Patients](#) which can assist in identifying medical care for individuals in need of treatment.

PROGRAM-PRIORITIZED VACCINATION GUIDELINES: HEPATITIS A & B

Agencies contracted by Iowa HHS to provide Integrated Testing Services are authorized by the program to provide prioritized hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccination services to the previously unvaccinated persons from the following populations in accordance with established program policies and procedures:

- Men who have sex with men;
- People who use injection drugs;
- People who use non-injection drugs;
- People who have been diagnosed with a recently acquired sexually transmitted infection (STI);
- People living with HIV;
- People diagnosed with hepatitis C;
- People who have sexual partners diagnosed with hepatitis A;
- People who have sexual partners diagnosed with hepatitis B; and
- People who have sexual partners living with HIV.