



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Screening for Hepatitis C

Information for patients

Hepatitis C is a blood borne virus that can cause chronic liver infection and inflammation. Chronic inflammation can, after many years, lead to liver failure. There is now highly effective treatment which can cure patients of Hepatitis C. NHS UK has an eradication program aimed at testing, treating and eliminating Hepatitis C completely.

You can catch Hepatitis C in the following ways:

- Injecting drugs and sharing infected needles, sharing “straws” or “foils”.
- Some people have caught Hepatitis C through blood transfusions, or treatment with other blood products, which took place before 1991, or abroad.
- There may be a small risk to people whose sexual partners have Hepatitis C. This risk is higher in men who have sex with men.
- It is possible that the infection can spread from mother to child during pregnancy or birth.

Screening for Hepatitis C

We can test for Hepatitis C in your blood. Tests can tell if an infection is active or non-active. Some patients can clear infections through their immune system and will not require treatment.

Hepatitis C may take several months to show itself in the blood. If you have recently been at risk, your test may not be reliable and you might be advised to have a repeat test after three months.

If you caught the infection recently, the local Public Health Department may need to be notified.

Treatment

There are six types (called genotypes:1 to 6) of Hepatitis C virus. Despite this, treatment has become relatively simple and highly effective. Treatment is by taking tablets for 3 to 6 months. Your GP or the Florey Clinic can refer you to a liver specialist for treatment.

A patient can be re-infected with Hepatitis C viruses. As alcohol increases liver damage, cutting out or cutting down your alcohol consumption would be advisable.

References

British Association of Sexual Health and HIV guidelines for management of viral Hepatitides A, B & C. 2008

For more information:

- NHS Website – www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-c/
- British Liver Trust – www.britishlivertrust.org.uk

If you would like any further information on any Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) or to find out how you can reduce your risks, please ask to speak to a Health Advisor whilst you are in the clinic.

Alternatively you can phone them on 0118 322 7202 during clinic hours.

Consistent use of condoms will reduce your risk of catching most STIs.

Contraception (25s and under) & Sexual Health (all ages) Drop-in Clinics – no appointment needed

Department of Sexual Health
Florey and Contraceptive Services
21A Craven Road
Reading RG1 5LE
Tel: 0118 322 7202
www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/sexualhealth
www.safesex.berkshire.nhs.uk
Except for public holidays, the clinic is open:

Monday to Friday 7am – 7pm.

Saturday 9.30 am – 11.30 am.

The clinic is closed on Wednesday
between 11am-1pm for staff training.

Newbury Sexual Health
Clinic
West Berkshire Community
Hospital
Benham Hill
Thatcham RG18 3AS
9.30am – 11.30am on
Saturdays (excluding public
holidays)



We will endeavour to see everyone. However, if between 6pm and 7pm attendance is high, we may ask you to return the next day.

This document can be made available in other languages
and formats upon request

Dept. of Sexual Health, September 2018.

Review due: September 2020