

Hepatitis testing in the Emergency Department (A&E)

This leaflet gives information about hepatitis testing, which is currently offered to all patients who need a blood test in the Emergency Department. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Why are you being tested for hepatitis B and C?

Hepatitis B and hepatitis C are viruses that cause an infection in the liver, called hepatitis. Some people infected with these viruses develop a long-term infection known as chronic hepatitis. If left untreated, these chronic infections can cause liver damage. An earlier diagnosis can reduce or prevent long-term harm to the liver.

We are currently offering hepatitis testing to any patient who needs a blood test in the Emergency Department. We believe that this is the safest approach, as many people do not realise they have been at risk for hepatitis infection, and symptoms can take many years (sometimes decades) to develop.

Will you get your result if the test is negative?

No, we will not contact you if your results are negative for hepatitis virus infection.

What happens if your hepatitis virus test is positive?

If your test is positive for hepatitis B or C (or you need more testing), we will contact you by telephone and ask you to come to the hospital to repeat the test and confirm your diagnosis. You will be seen by a team of hepatitis specialists who have many years of experience managing people with these infections.

Testing positive is often a shock but it is much worse for you to live with a hepatitis virus that is not being treated. The treatment for these viruses is extremely safe and effective and allows your body to repair the damage to your liver. Sometimes the result is not clear. In this case we must see you again to repeat the test.

What if you don't want to know your hepatitis virus status?

Many people do not realise they have been infected with a hepatitis virus, which is why it is important for us to test everyone who comes to our Emergency Department. It is always much better to have the hepatitis virus tests and check if you need treatment. However, if you decide you don't want to be tested for these viruses, please speak to a member of staff who will make sure we cancel your tests.

What if your contact details change?

It is important that we have your correct contact details in case we need to speak to you about your test. Please make sure we have the correct contact details. If they change in the week after your test, let us know by calling 020 7188 2120 so we can update your records.

Information sharing

Information on hepatitis testing will be shared with Public Health England to help them reduce the risk of hepatitis in our community. If you do not want your information shared please tell a member of staff in the Emergency Department.

Useful sources of information

British Liver Trust, providing information and support about a wide range of diseases affecting the liver, including hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses, **t:** 0800 652 7330, **e:** info@britishlivertrust.org.uk **w:** www.britishlivertrust.org.uk

Hepatitis C Trust, the national UK charity for hepatitis C, **t:** 020 7089 6220, **e:** helpline@hepctrust.org.uk **w:** www.hepctrust.org.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Emergency Department at St Thomas' Hospital, **t:** 020 7188 2127 (24 hours).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111 **w:** www.111.nhs.uk

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