



HEPATITIS C CHECKLIST

You may find this checklist helpful if you think you may be at risk of hep C. Talk to your healthcare professional about hep C and getting tested. You don't need to explain why you would like to get tested if you feel uncomfortable doing so. It doesn't matter how you caught hep C, it is important to get tested.

HEP C RISK FACTORS

You may be at high risk of hepatitis C if you can say 'Yes' to any of the following:

- Have you ever had a tattoo or body piercing done using unsterile equipment or somewhere other than a licensed studio?
- Did you receive a blood transfusion prior to July 1992?
- Have you ever taken drugs through needles or your nose - even once?
- Have you ever had jaundice (yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes) or abnormal liver function?
- Have you ever lived in or received health care in Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, North Africa, Western and Central Sub-Saharan Africa or Eastern Europe?
 - Before 2012 hep C was not a mandatory test for immigrants or visitors intending to spend more than 12 months in New Zealand.
- Does your mother or a household member have hep C?
- Have you ever been in prison?

Less common risks include:

- Sexual practices which may risk blood contact with a person who is infected with the hepatitis C virus
- Sharing personal care items, such as razors or toothbrushes that may have come in contact with the blood of an infected person
- HIV infection

HEP C SYMPTOMS

The symptoms associated with hep C infection may be different for everyone. Many people with hep C do not have symptoms and do not know they are infected. Some people will notice symptoms just two weeks after becoming infected, while others will experience them six months later. In some cases, people can live with hep C for 20 to 30 years before they experience any symptoms at all.

If symptoms occur, they may include:

- Feeling tired
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Joint pain
- Jaundice - which is yellowing of the whites of the eyes, or dark urine, or pale-coloured bowel movements

This checklist is not meant to diagnose people with hep C, nor does it replace the advice of your healthcare professional. Please talk to your healthcare professional if you have any questions about hep C.

TALKING TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT HEPATITIS C

Here are some questions that may help you organise your thoughts when you visit:

- What tests do I need?
- What could the results mean?
- Where do I have to go to be tested?
- Do I need to get tested for hep A and hep B?
- Are there any foods or activities that I should avoid?

GETTING TESTED FOR HEP C IS THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW FOR SURE IF YOU HAVE IT.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hepatitis C FAQs for the Public. www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/cfaq.htm Accessed May 2022.
The Hepatitis Foundation of New Zealand. <https://www.hepatitisfoundation.org.nz/> Accessed July 2022.
Data on file. Information received from Immigration New Zealand.

This resource/checklist was downloaded from the www.hepinfo.co.nz website. The website is intended solely for New Zealand residents. It is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used to replace a discussion with a healthcare professional. All decisions made regarding patient care must be handled by a healthcare professional and be made based on the unique needs of each patient.

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