



IMMUNE SYSTEM

Antibodies

WHEN there is an infection in the body, the immune system produces proteins to help fight off germs that cause infections – these are called antibodies. In some cases the antibodies will help to completely fight off the infection—this is the case when someone catches a cold or hepatitis A. There are also antibodies produced from vaccines to prevent future infections—such as the hepatitis A vaccine.

HIV: Antibodies against HIV do not prevent people from getting re-infected with HIV. But HIV antibodies can help to control HIV for a time (especially in the early stages). If there are no HIV medications being taken HIV will overpower most peoples' immune systems leading to damage and death over time.

HCV: Antibodies against HCV also do not prevent a person from getting re-infected with HCV. If someone with HIV has a severely damaged immune system (low CD4 cell count) they may not be able to make antibodies against other diseases such as HCV. In that case an HCV RNA (or viral load) test is given to see if they are infected with HCV.

educate yourself

Check this out:

- Antibodies are proteins the body makes to destroy germs
- Antibodies do not cause infection
- People have antibodies for life even if they were cured of the condition that caused the body to produce the antibodies
- Antibodies to HIV and HCV do not protect against future infections
- There are vaccines that will prevent certain diseases and are recommended for people with HIV and HCV including:
 - * Diphtheria-tetanus
 - * Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine
 - * Influenza (flu)
 - * Hepatitis A (HAV)
 - * Hepatitis B (HBV)

*For Living
Positively
Being Well*

