

EASY FACTS

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Hepatitis C Antibody Test

When the hepatitis C virus (HCV or Hep C for short) enters your body, your immune system releases chemicals into your bloodstream to help fight off the Hep C virus. These are called antibodies.

If you have HCV antibodies it means that you have been infected with HCV, but it does not mean that you have active HCV.

For some people (2 to 4 out of 10) the body's natural defenses can get rid of the virus, but for the other 6 to 8 people the body cannot kill off the virus.

The most common antibody test used is the Elisa or EIA test.

In order to find out if the hepatitis C virus is in your body you will need to have another blood test called a viral load test.

Remember.....

- ◆ Even if you have been infected with hepatitis C, your body may have been able to get rid of the virus all on its own. That's why it's so important to have a viral load test.
- ◆ Having HCV antibodies does not protect you from becoming re-infected with Hep C.
- ◆ Try not to worry too much – it usually takes many years for the virus to damage the liver.

www.hcvadvocate.org

