



HCSP FACT SHEET

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Fibroscan

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FORWARD

In 2013 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cleared Fibroscan for marketing. Fibroscan is based on ultrasound elastography technology using a machine that sends a vibration wave through the liver. The Fibroscan will measure how long it takes for the wave to travel through the liver. It has been tested extensively in people with hepatitis C.

While the Fibroscan isn't 100% accurate, it has been shown to have a high degree of accuracy for predicting mild fibrosis, severe fibrosis and cirrhosis. It is less likely to distinguish the difference between no or minimal fibrosis. It is also been shown to be less accurate in people who are obese, and in those who have bile duct damage or ascites (accumulation of fluid in the abdominal cavity). Although not 100% accurate there have been studies that have found that combining the Fibroscan and Fibrometer—a blood test that measures hyaluronate, prothrombin time, platelets, AST, a2 macroglobulin, urea, and age—can provide a very high degree of accuracy.

The actual procedure is painless. A gel is deposited on the skin where the Fibroscan probe will be pressed (in the location of the liver) and multiple readings are taken. Once the procedure is completed the machine will take an average of all of the readings.

The advantages of the Fibroscan vs. the percutaneous or needle biopsy include:

- Fibroscan is a patient friendly and anxiety-free procedure especially compared to a needle biopsy.
- Relatively quick and simple procedure that can be performed more frequently and in an outpatient setting.

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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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- It is safe for people who have a risk of bleeding (people with bleeding disorders, people with low platelets, etc.).

The price of the procedure varies, but since it is FDA approved and there is less of a chance of complications, medical insurance companies should cover some or all of the costs. Be sure to check out this page on Fibroscan at HepCBC <http://hepcbc.ca/fibroscan-alternative-to-biopsy/> and this informative video on Youtube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE4ZGmKooA

Related publications:

An Overview of HCV Diagnostic Tests

www.hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets_pdf/diagnostic.pdf

HCV Genotype, Quasispecies and Subtype

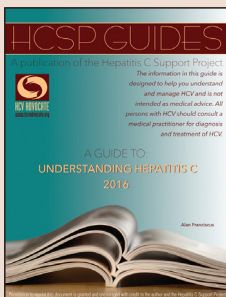
http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets_pdf/genotype.pdf

Viral Load Test

http://hcvadvocate.org/hepatitis/factsheets_pdf/viralload.pdf

For more information

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
www.cdc.gov/Hepatitis
- **MedlinePlus:**
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003895.htm
- **Mayo Clinic:**
www.mayoclinic.com/health/liver-biopsy/MY00949
- **National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC)**
<http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/liverbiopsy/>



A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING HCV 2016
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