

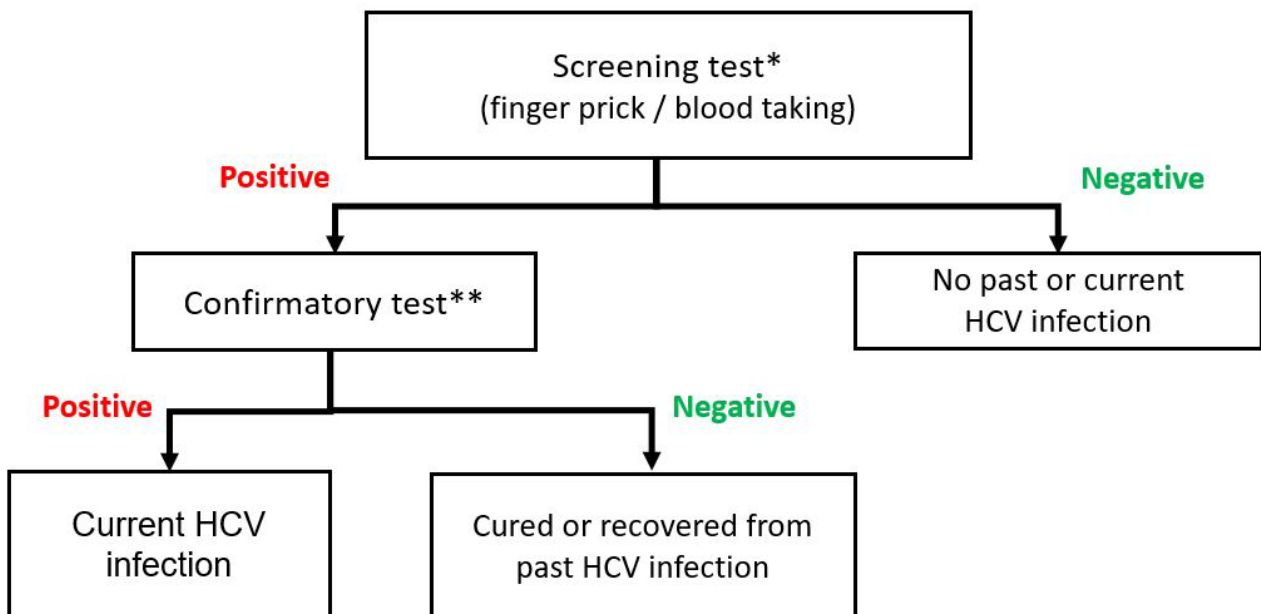
Getting tested for hepatitis C can save your life

Hepatitis C can cause liver cancer

- Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection. People infected with HCV can develop chronic hepatitis, which may lead to cirrhosis and liver cancer.
- Hepatitis C can remain asymptomatic until decades after infection when symptoms develop secondary to serious liver damage.
- Hepatitis C can be easily transmitted through contact with blood. Sharing needles, syringes or other equipment for injecting drugs can spread the infection.
- In Hong Kong, more than 60% of people who inject drugs (PWID) have past or current hepatitis C infection.

Blood test is needed to diagnose hepatitis C

Testing for hepatitis C is recommended for current or former PWID, including those who injected drugs only once or a few times many years ago, no matter whether they have symptoms.



* Screening test: Test for antibody against HCV (Anti-HCV) to determine whether a person has past exposure to HCV

** Confirmatory test: Test for HCV ribonucleic acid (HCV RNA) to determine whether a person currently has HCV

Oral medication can cure hepatitis C

Use of direct-acting antivirals (DAA) for around 8-12 weeks can cure HCV infection, thereby reducing the risk of progression to liver cancer and dying from liver diseases.

- ✓ **Highly effective**
- ✓ **Minor side effects**
- ✓ **Oral administration (Do not require injection)**

Protecting yourself from hepatitis C infection

As treatment does not confer protective immunity, recovered hepatitis C patients still have to observe the following:

- **Stop injecting drug use**
 - Get into **methadone** treatment programme
 - Blood attached to a used needle, even in amounts too small to see, could dissolve in water and contaminate the containers and other equipment, such as filters and spoons, and pose risk of HCV transmission
- **Avoid sharing personal care items (e.g. razors and toothbrushes) that are potentially contaminated with blood**
- **Use condom when having sex**



www.hepatitis.gov.hk

Viral Hepatitis Control Office
Special Preventive Programme
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