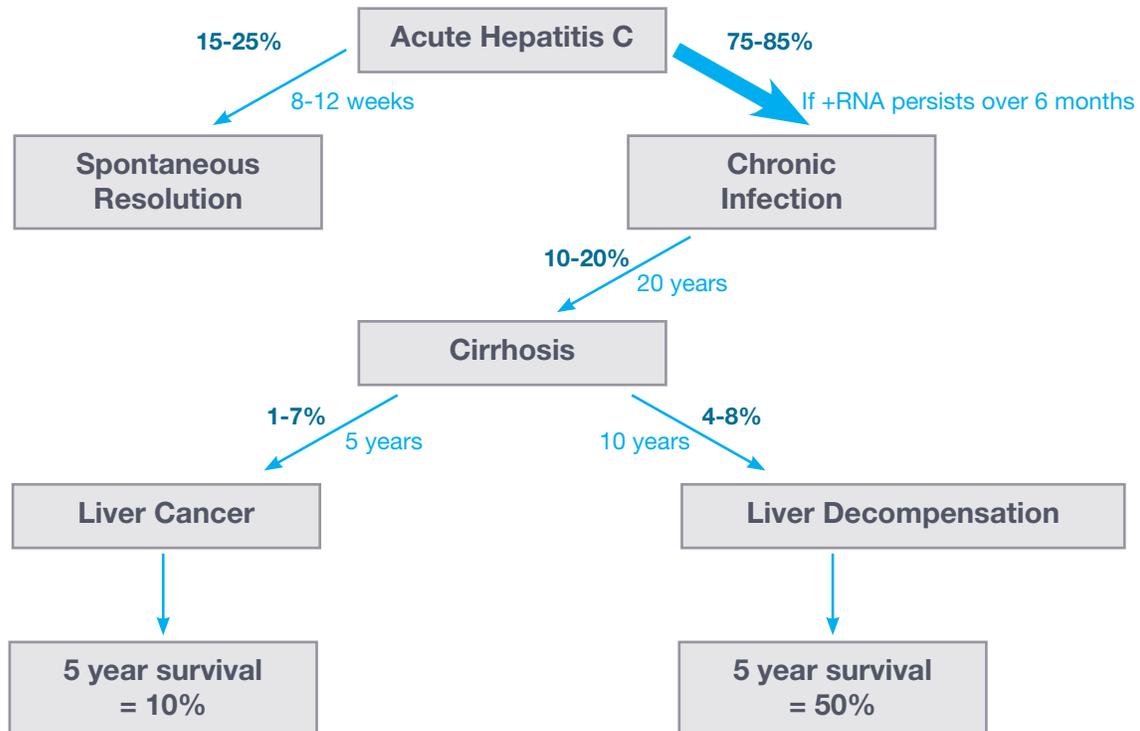




# Natural History of HEPATITIS C



Adapted from Chen and Morgan. International J of Medical Sciences. 2006;3(2):47-52.

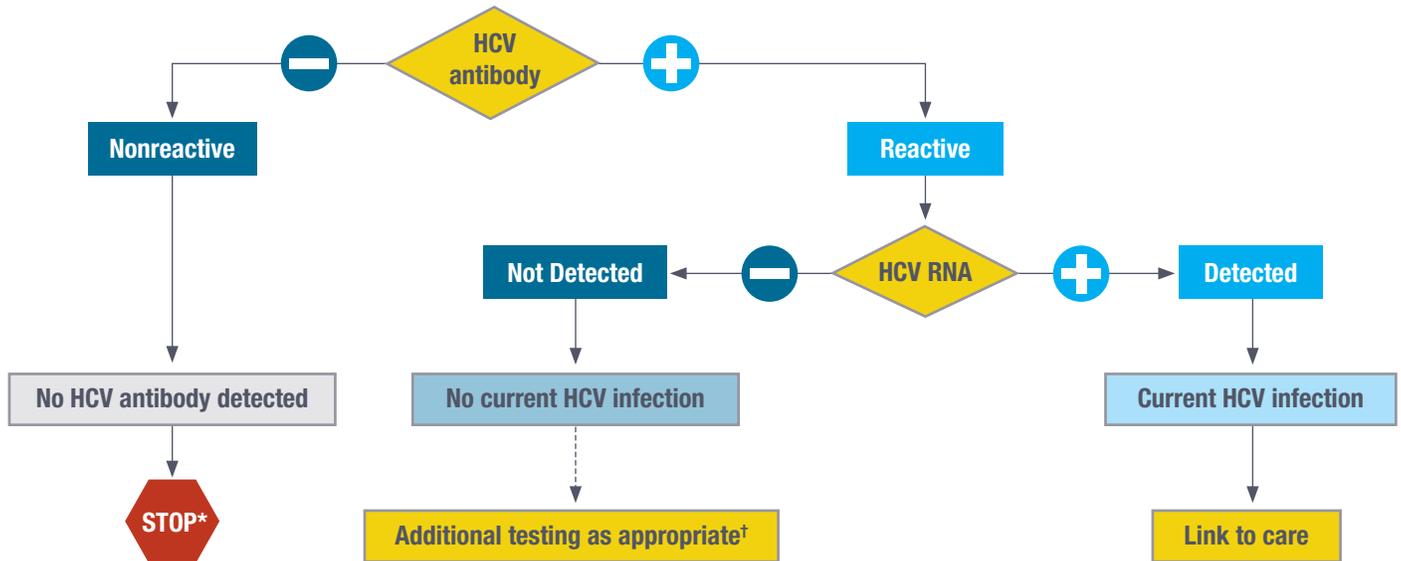
## What to tell your patient:

- Acute Hep C is a new infection that lasts less than six months. 15 to 25% of people with a new infection fight it off on their own within six months. They do not get the chronic infection and aren't contagious.
- Chronic Hep C is an infection that lasts six months or more. 75 to 85% of people develop chronic infection.
- Over time, the inflammation caused by Hep C infection can damage the liver. This can lead to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver cancer and liver failure.
- The majority of people with chronic Hep C do not have symptoms until the late stages of disease.
- Most people can be cured of Hep C with antiviral treatment in less than 3 months with few side effects.
- Early treatment can prevent cirrhosis, liver cancer and liver failure.
- Even people who have cirrhosis can lower their risk of liver cancer and liver failure if they get treated and cured of Hep C.



# HCV Testing Sequence and Result Interpretation

## Recommended Testing Sequence for Identifying Current Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Infection



\* For persons who might have been exposed to HCV within the past 6 months, testing for HCV RNA or follow-up testing for HCV antibody is recommended. For persons who are immunocompromised, testing for HCV RNA can be considered.

† To differentiate past, resolved HCV infection from biologic false positivity for HCV antibody, testing with another HCV antibody assay can be considered. Repeat HCV RNA testing if the person tested is suspected to have had HCV exposure within the past 6 months or has clinical evidence of HCV disease, or if there is concern regarding the handling or storage of the test specimen.

Source: CDC. Testing for HCV infection: An update of guidance for clinicians and laboratorians. MMWR 2013;62(18).

## Interpretation of Results of Tests for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Infection and Further Actions

TEST OUTCOME	INTERPRETATION	FURTHER ACTIONS
HCV antibody nonreactive	No HCV antibody detected	Sample can be reported as nonreactive for HCV antibody. No further action required. If recent exposure in person tested is suspected, test for HCV RNA.*
HCV antibody reactive	Presumptive HCV infection	A repeatedly reactive result may indicate current HCV infection, resolved HCV infection, or false positive result. Order an RNA test to identify current infection.
HCV antibody reactive, HCV RNA detected	Current HCV infection	Provide person tested with appropriate counseling and link person tested to care and treatment.†
HCV antibody reactive, HCV RNA not detected	No current HCV infection	No further action required in most cases. If distinction between true positivity and biologic false positivity for HCV antibody is desired, and if sample is repeatedly reactive in the initial test, test with another HCV antibody assay. In certain situations,‡ follow up with HCV RNA testing and appropriate counseling.

\* If HCV RNA testing is not feasible and person tested is not immunocompromised, do follow-up testing for HCV antibody to demonstrate seroconversion. If the person tested is immunocompromised, consider testing for HCV RNA.

† It is recommended before initiating antiviral therapy to retest for HCV RNA in a subsequent blood sample to confirm HCV RNA positivity.

‡ If the person tested is suspected of having HCV exposure within the past 6 months, or has clinical evidence of HCV disease, or if there is concern regarding the handling or storage of the test specimen.