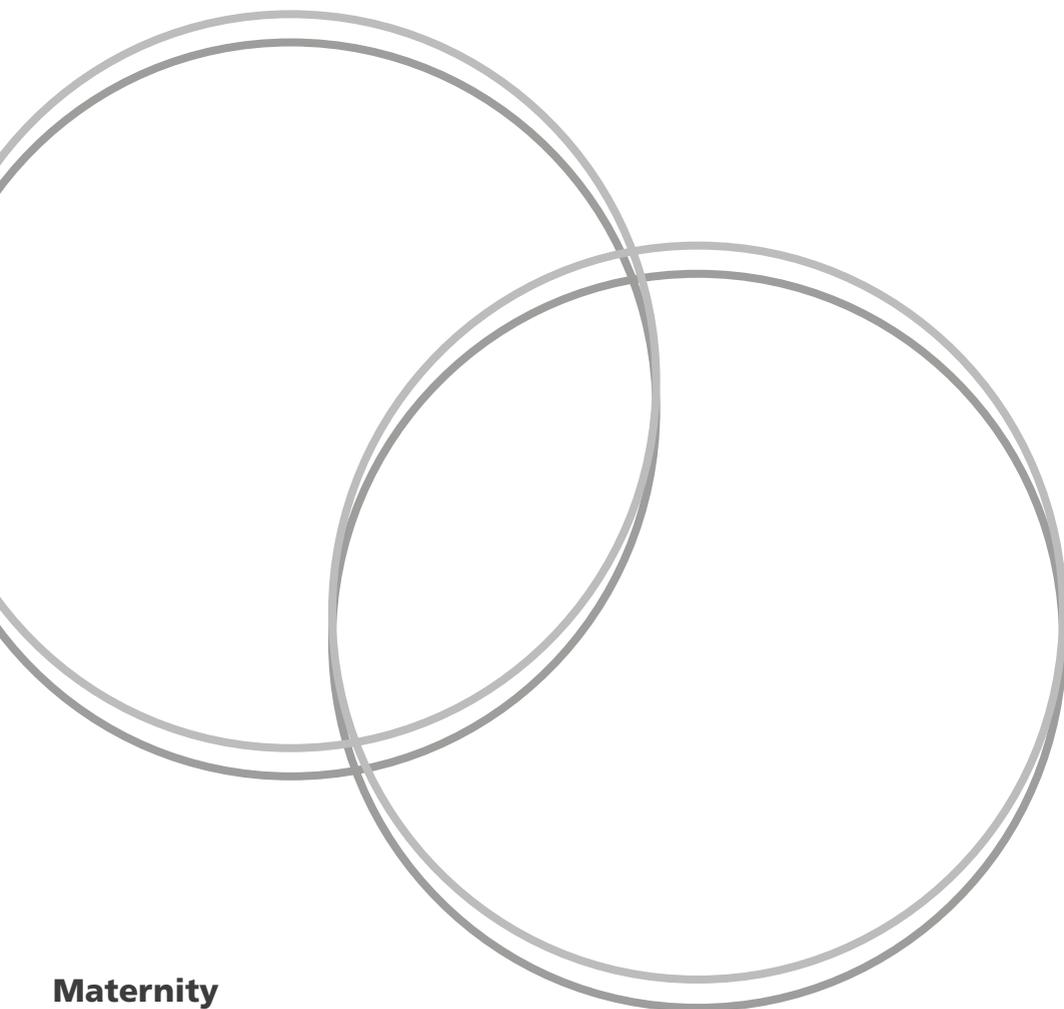


Hepatitis C Screen Positive Results in Pregnancy

Information leaflet



At your booking appointment you were offered tests to screen for a number of infections, including Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis means inflammation (swelling) of the liver. When this swelling is caused by a virus, it's called viral Hepatitis. These infections can lead to long-term illness such as cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver. Cirrhosis is when healthy cells of the liver die and are replaced by scar tissue and over time the liver can stop working efficiently. In rare cases, chronic hepatitis (long term/recurring infection) can lead to liver cancer.

Most people with Hepatitis C don't know they are infected. That's partly because only 1 in 4 people with Hepatitis C have symptoms. Infection without symptoms can lead to cirrhosis that may cause severe complications later in life.

Hepatitis C is spread through direct contact with infected blood:

- This can happen while sharing household items or needles that can carry small amounts of blood (razors, nail clippers, toothbrushes).
- People who use drugs or who have ever used drugs may be exposed to contracting (catching) hepatitis C.
- People who work in the healthcare field may be exposed to infected blood at work.
- It also can be spread during unprotected sex, however this is not common.

It is not spread by casual contact (for example – by sharing eating utensils).

Hepatitis C can be passed from mother to baby during birth, although not as commonly as Hepatitis B.

About 6 in 100 pregnant women and birthing people who have Hepatitis C may pass it on to their babies. Your individual chance will vary depending on how much virus there is in your blood and whether you also have HIV. There is no vaccine to protect against contracting Hepatitis C, but there is effective treatment which cures the infection. This treatment is available to everyone with a viral Hepatitis C infection in the UK.

The medication for treating Hepatitis C is not recommended to be taken during pregnancy.

Testing for Hepatitis C during pregnancy allows time to plan the safest care and treatment for you and your baby after the birth in the event of a positive result.

It is safe to breastfeed your baby if you have a viral Hepatitis C infection.

The medication to treat Hepatitis C will not be started until after breastfeeding has ceased.

Your baby will see a doctor in the children's clinic at 18 months of age.

Any adult over 18 years of age in the UK can be screened for Hepatitis C. This can be done at home.

Visit the following website:

<https://hepctest.nhs.uk/more-about-hepatitis-c>

We would encourage you to ask your family to get tested. If you have other children, you can ask your GP to test them for Hepatitis C.

Speak to your midwife if you have any questions or you can look on these websites for further information:

Website: www.hepctrust.org.uk

Website: <https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/information-and-support/liver-conditions/hepatitis-c>

*all pregnant women/birthing people are offered a test for HIV, hepatitis B and syphilis.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

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