

HCV/HEPC Talking Points for Providers

FAQ SHEET

ANSWER

Pregnancy and Hep C (CDC Guidance)

Testing

Should pregnant women be tested for HCV antibodies?	Yes. All pregnant women should be screened for anti-HCV during each pregnancy, except in settings where the prevalence of HCV infection (HCV RNA-positivity) is <0.1%. Pregnant women with known risk factors should be tested during each pregnancy, regardless of setting prevalence. Any pregnant women testing positive for anti-HCV should receive a PCR test for HCV RNA to determine current infection status.
The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists recommendations	The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists is updating its hepatitis C screening guidance to recommend screening for all pregnant individuals during each pregnancy. Hepatitis C screening during the first prenatal blood assessment obtained in every pregnancy is recommended to identify pregnant individuals with HCV infection and infants who should receive testing at a pediatric visit. Hepatitis C screening during pregnancy should be an opportunity to promote a dialogue between pregnant individuals and their clinician about hepatitis C transmission and risk factors. <i>The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists recommendations can be found by clicking here</i>
Can a mother with hepatitis C infect her infant during birth?	The overall risk of an infected mother transmitting HCV to her infant is approximately 4%–8% per pregnancy. transmission occurs during pregnancy or childbirth, and no prophylaxis is available to protect the newborn from infection. The risk is significantly higher if the mother has a high HCV viral load or is coinfecting with HIV with which the rate of transmission ranges from 8%–15%. Most infants infected with HCV at birth have no symptoms.
When should children born to HCV-infected mothers be tested to see if they were infected at birth?	Per the CDC, children should be tested for HCV antibodies (anti-HCV) no sooner than age 18 months because anti-HCV from the mother might last until this age. If diagnosis is desired before the child reaches 18 months, testing for HCV RNA can be performed at or after the infant's first well-child visit at age 1–2 months. HCV RNA testing should then be repeated at a subsequent visit, independent of the initial HCV RNA test result.
Should a woman with hepatitis C be advised against breastfeeding?	No. There is no evidence that breastfeeding spreads hepatitis C. Currently, both the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists support breastfeeding in HCV-infected women. Not enough information is available regarding the risks of transmission through breastfeeding by infected mothers with cracked or bleeding nipples. However, because HCV is a bloodborne infection, if a mother with hepatitis C has cracked or bleeding nipples, she should stop nursing temporarily until her nipples heal.

Resources & Support

Drug Interactions	Please visit for more information click here
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This site gives comprehensive information on the MDHHS "We Treat Hep C" initiative click here • This site give answers to frequently asked questions about the "We Treat Hep C" initiative. Click here for FAQ • General information and resources related to viral Hepatitis click here • Resource for information in Syringe Exchange Programs in the State of Michigan.
Pregnancy and Hepatitis C Per the CDC	For more information on Pregnancy and Hep C
Syringe Service Program Near Me	For more information on syringe exchanges and service programs within your area visit
Hepatitis C Treatment Guide & Simplified treatment algorithm for both non-cirrhotic and cirrhotic patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients without Cirrhosis visit • Patients with Compensated Cirrhosis visit