

HEPATITIS C TESTING, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT



Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is a global health problem that can go undetected for decades, often only identified once an infected individual has symptoms such as jaundice or fatigue. Hepatitis C is passed from one infected individual to another individual through blood exposure (such as through the sharing of needles) and sexual transmission. The disease can lead to cirrhosis (liver scarring) and end-stage liver disease in a substantial proportion of patients. Because it is frequently asymptomatic, screening is essential to improving the detection and ultimately treatment of infected individuals.

Universal one-time screening for HCV infection in all adults 18 years of age and older is recommended. Universal screening is supported by the substantial benefit to each patient should they test positive to initiate treatment of HCV infection, with minimal risks associated with screening.

Testing for clinical suspicion – Testing for HCV infection is also warranted in people with evidence of liver disease, with extrahepatic conditions associated with HCV, or with known exposure.

Diagnosis – The diagnosis of chronic HCV infection is usually made in a patient with a reactive HCV antibody test and a positive molecular test that detects the presence of HCV RNA.

Post-diagnostic evaluation – Important aspects of initial care of the patient newly diagnosed with HCV involve evaluating the extent of liver damage and assessing factors that inform treatment decisions. Treatment includes 8-12 weeks of antiviral drug therapy which is easily tolerated by most patients. McLaren Flint's Hepatitis C clinic offers all the aspects of management.

Shagufta Ali, MD, FACP



Dr. Shagufta Ali is a board-certified infectious disease specialist who is fellowshipp trained in the management of a broad array of diseases caused by germs, including hepatitis B and C.

Referrals to the McLaren Flint Infectious Disease program can be sent by physicians and clinic staff through our Cerner EMR system or by calling 810-342-2534.

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