

Before testing, you might want to think about the impact of either a negative or positive result on your future. You might have concerns relating to:

- Personal relationships
- Insurance access
- Lifestyle
- Employment
- Treatments

Staff at the services will be able to go through these areas of concern with you, prior to testing.

Treatment

The primary goal of treatment is to completely remove the virus from the body. In most cases, complete eradication is possible. Decisions relating to appropriateness of treatment are dependent on:

- Whether the treatment is beneficial for the patients
- Which treatment will be most effective
- How long the treatment should continue for
- Extent of liver damage
- Presence or absence of symptoms
- The Hepatitis C genotype
- Age, gender and ability to adhere to treatment

In some cases, standard treatment is a combination of Pegylated interferon and Ribavirin. Pegylated interferon is an antiviral agent that is injected subcutaneously (under the skin) once a week. If you are unsure or have any more questions, please contact the key workers in confidence at the following services:

- New Hope, 92 The Broadway, Bracknell
- Turning Point, 329-333 High Street, Slough
- Turning Point, Grove Road, Maidenhead

Slough



1. Kamal Enterprises Ltd, 16 Chalvey Road West, Slough SL1 2PN
2. J E Ross, 112 Stoke Road, Slough SL2 5AP
3. Lloyds Pharmacy, 45 Osbourne Street, Slough SL1 1PQ
4. Boots, 184 High Street, Slough SL1 1PE
5. K Pharmacy, 400 Farnham Road, Slough SL2 1JA
6. Lloyds Pharmacy, 18 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Slough SL3 8BB
7. Turning Point, 331-333 High Street, Slough SL1 1TX

Bracknell Forest



1. New Hope, 92 Broadway, Bracknell RG12 1AR
2. Great Hollands Pharmacy, 6 Great Hollands Square, Bracknell RG12 8UX
3. Alliance Pharmacy, 5 The Square, Harmanwater, Bracknell RG12 9LP
4. Lloyds Pharmacy, 12 Dukes Ride, Crowthorne RG45 6LT
5. Lloyds Pharmacy, 3 Bullbrook Row, Bracknell RG12 2NL
6. Superdrug Pharmacy, Unit D, Charles Square, Bracknell RG12 1DF

Windsor & Maidenhead

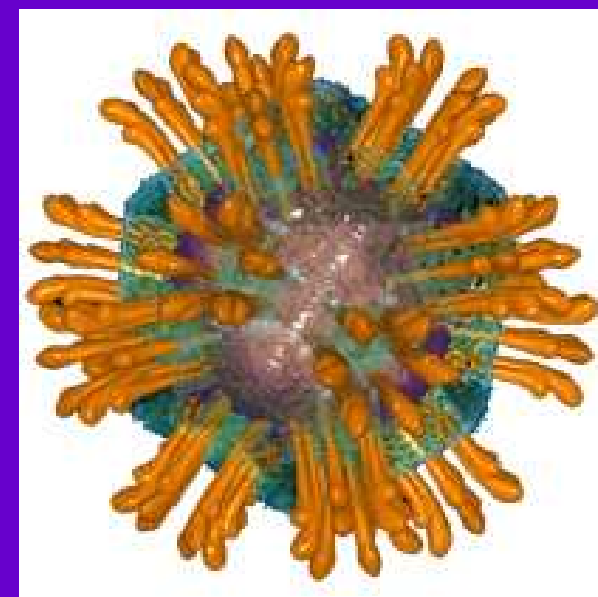


1. Lloyds Pharmacy, 4 Broomhall Buildings, Chobham Road, Sunningdale, Ascot SL5 0DH
2. Olive Pharmacy, 18 Hampden Road, Maidenhead SL6 5HQ
3. Park Pharmacy, Wilderness Medical Centre, 4 Cookham Road, Maidenhead SL6 8AJ
4. Boots Chemists, 54-58 High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1PY
5. Superdrug, 36-40 Brock Lane Mall, The Nicholson Centre, Maidenhead SL6 1LL
6. Boots The Chemists Ltd, 113 Peascod Street, Windsor SL4 1DN
7. T2 Maidenhead, Grove Road. Maidenhead SL6 1LW
8. Woodland Park Pharmacy, Waltham Road, Woodland Park, Maidenhead SL6 3NH
9. Kays Chemist, 24 Ross Road, Maidenhead SL6 2SZ

EAST BERKSHIRE NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Issue 3

Hepatitis C



Berkshire East 
Primary Care Trust

Hepatitis C is a highly infectious Blood Borne Virus that affects the liver.

Hepatitis C

In the UK, between 200,000 and 400,000 people are infected with Hepatitis C. Following infection, 15% of people experience a short lived infection and naturally clear the virus. The remaining 85% develop an infection that can last a lifetime. In both cases, symptoms may be absent.

The virus

The virus remains infectious in blood outside the body for a few weeks. It is passed on via blood to blood contact. There are several types of the Hepatitis virus, ranging from the letters A to G. Unlike Hepatitis A and B, there is no vaccination to prevent Hepatitis C infection.

Note that they all cause damage to your liver if left untreated.

The liver

Your liver is the second largest organ in your body (skin is the first). The liver is like a factory that processes the drugs, medicines and chemicals that you put into your body. It also cleans poisons from your blood and provides you with energy.

Any form of liver damage will cause the cells to die and form scar tissue, and the longer the damage the more the scar tissue will spread, reducing the blood flow, oxygen and nutrients to your liver.

This means that the chemicals, poisons and drugs that you are putting into your body will start accumulating.

If his scarring continues to spread, it will eventually lead to liver failure or liver cancer.

You only have one liver and you cannot live without it!

The symptoms

Symptoms vary from person to person. Some of the most commonly experienced symptoms include:

- Muscle aches and high temperature
- Nausea
- Feeling tired and lazy
- Inability to concentrate (brain fog)
- Loss of appetite
- Depression and anxiety
- Abdominal pain
- Alcohol intolerance
- Nausea and vomiting
- Jaundice (yellow eyes, skin etc)



How is it transmitted?

Hepatitis C is spread mainly by direct contact with human blood. Routes of transmission include:

- Sharing needles and paraphernalia
- Blood transfusion or blood products (pre 1991 in the UK)
- Tattooing with unsterilised equipment
- Piercing with unsterilised equipment
- Sharing equipment used to snort drugs
- Sharing personal hygiene items such as razors, toothbrushes or nail scissors with an infected person
- Mother to baby during pregnancy, delivery and breastfeeding
- Needle stick injury
- Unprotected sex with an infected person

The diagnosis

Hepatitis C is diagnosed by detecting antibodies to the virus in the blood. The average time between initial infection and detectable antibodies is 2-3 months, although it can take up to 6 months. This is known as the window period. Positive antibody tests should be followed up with a viral RNA (Ribonucleic acid) test to confirm the presence of an infection.

Following confirmation of chronic infection, you may be referred for further tests to a specialist such as a gastroenterologist, hepatologist or infectious disease consultant.

Testing and treatment

Testing for Hepatitis C is free and can be carried out at your GP practice, and it will be offered to you at the open access services. These are:

- **New Hope, 92 Broadway, Bracknell**
- **Turning Point, 329-333 High Street, Slough**
- **Turning Point, Grove Road, Maidenhead**
- **Garden Clinic, Upton Park Hospital, Slough**