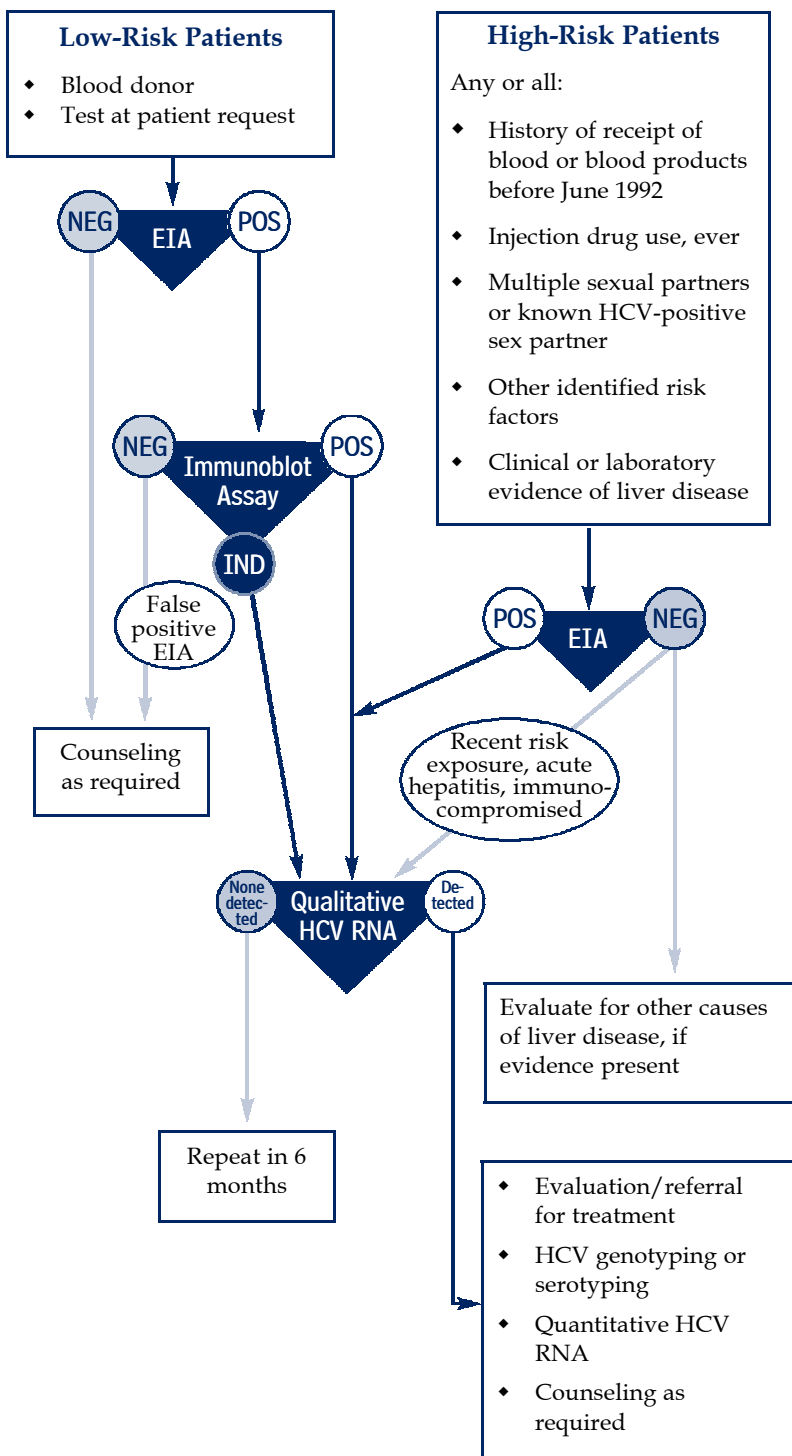


A Diagnostic Algorithm for Hepatitis C (HCV)



Key

EIA: enzyme immunoassay, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA)

Immunoblot assay: such as RIBA, SIA, etc.

HCV RNA: assay of RNA by tests such as RT-PCR, bDNA, etc.

POS: positive or elevated

NEG: not elevated

IND: indeterminate



Diagnosis and Treatment Algorithm for Hepatitis C (HCV)

Adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health from the
NIH Consensus Development Conference Statement

Is HCV screening indicated for a patient?

- ◆ Obtain risk history to determine likelihood of past exposure to HCV

What makes a patient high-risk?

Any or all:

- ◆ Receipt of blood or blood products before June 1992
- ◆ Injection drug use, even once
- ◆ Multiple sexual partners or known HCV+ sex partner
- ◆ Other identified risk factors
- ◆ Clinical or laboratory evidence of liver disease

Tell patients with risk history who are not HCV infected:

- ◆ Hepatitis C infection can be prevented
- ◆ Avoid sharing injection equipment if using drugs; refer to drug treatment and needle exchange program
- ◆ When having sex, use a latex condom for anal and vaginal sex with a person who is HCV infected or whose HCV status you do not know (consistent and correct use of condoms prevents the transmission of other diseases as well)
- ◆ Casual contact (e.g., kissing, shaking hands, sneezing, hugging, sharing food) does not put them at risk

Tell patients who are HCV infected:

- ◆ Consider referral to specialist for treatment evaluation
- ◆ If HIV-infected, inform the health care provider treating them for HIV
- ◆ If pregnant, inform the prenatal care provider
- ◆ Avoid drinking alcohol
- ◆ Consult health care provider before using any medications (including over-the-counter)
- ◆ Get vaccinated against hepatitis A and B, unless already immune
- ◆ Avoid sharing syringes, cookers, other injection equipment, or straws if using drugs; refer to drug treatment and needle exchange program
- ◆ Do not share household items (such as toothbrushes, razors, needles, or nail clippers) that can be contaminated with blood or other body fluids
- ◆ Practice safer sex (e.g., use a latex condom for anal and vaginal sex)
- ◆ Do not donate body organs or blood, semen, or other body fluids
- ◆ Talk to anyone they may have exposed to HCV and encourage them to get screened

**Hepatitis C is reportable to your local Board of Health
or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health**