



Opt out testing for Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B and HIV

If you are ≥ 16 years of age and present to our Emergency Department (ED) at the RBHFT your blood sample will be tested for hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HIV, unless you opt out. Royal Berkshire Hospital's ED is one of 47 EDs in the country which has been chosen for the blood borne virus (BBV) opt out testing nationally

If you do not wish to be tested for these viruses, please let a member of staff know. This will not in any way affect the care you receive from us.

How long do test results take: It can take up to 14 days for the opt out tests to be processed and communicated

Will I always receive a phone call: No!

You will **ONLY** be contacted, if your test results are abnormal or not clear. If you have not received a phone call within 14 days after your blood test, this means your tests were all normal (negative for the viruses) - **"NO NEWS, IS GOOD NEWS"!**

Why is this important: Early diagnosis of blood-borne viruses such as HIV, hepatitis B and C means people can access the treatment they need sooner than otherwise. This allows people to lead healthier and better lives in the long term.

Hepatitis B: Affects your liver. Most adults that contract hepatitis B recover fully, but if infected as a child, self-clearing of the virus is unlikely. Treatment is very effective and is usually in the form of tablets. Some people do not need treatment for the virus as it may not be causing damage to the liver. They will need regular check-ups though. An important other step is to vaccinate those that live with you and these vaccines can be provided free of charge by your GP.

Further information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-b/>
<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/information-and-support/liver-conditions/hepatitis-b/>

Hepatitis C: Affects your liver and can lead to serious liver problems if not treated. You can have hepatitis C for many years and not notice any symptoms, but this does not mean it isn't affecting your liver. Hepatitis C is curable. Treatment is a course of tablets, taken for 8-12 weeks. You are unlikely to experience side-effects from the treatment.

Further support: www.hepctrust.org.uk

HIV: stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. 'Immunodeficiency' refers to the weakening of the immune system by the virus. HIV can be causing damage silently for many years; you may have no signs or symptoms. Treatment is normally a fixed dose combination tablet, taking it once a day. The treatment is so effective that it stops the virus from reproducing in your body. It reduces the amount of virus in the blood to undetectable levels, meaning you cannot pass on HIV and can expect to live a normal lifespan.

Further support from Terrance Higgins Trust: www.tht.org.uk

Further Questions: If you have any further questions about the opt out testing, please do not come back to the Emergency Department. The ED team will not have access to test results. Please remember 'No news is good news' if tested. Please use the resources available online and on the Trust's webpage for more information about the study via the QR code (insert).

For any additional queries, please contact: bbv-ed-optout@royalberkshire.nhs.uk