

Anti-hepatitis B core test



Information if you get
a positive test result



Easy read booklet

Who we are and what this booklet is about



We are **NHS Scotland**. We look after health services in Scotland.



This booklet gives answers to **frequently asked questions** about a positive anti-hepatitis B core test result.

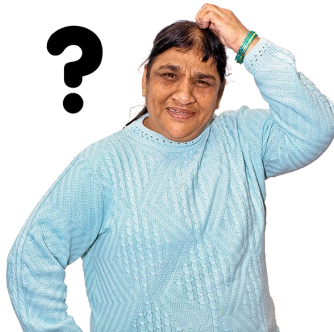


Frequently asked questions (called **FAQs** for short) are questions people are most likely to ask about something.

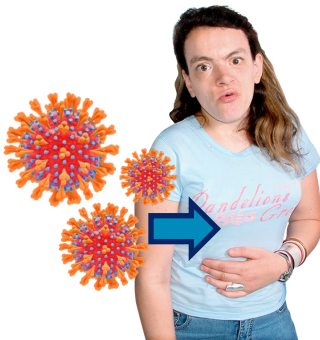


We tell you more about the anti-hepatitis B core test and what a positive test result means on the next pages of this booklet.

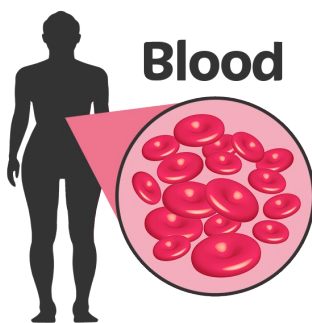
About hepatitis B



Hepatitis B is an **infection** that happens in your **liver** because of the hepatitis B **virus**.

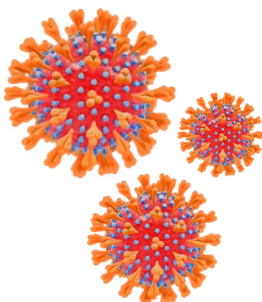


An **infection** is when germs enter your body and grow and make you ill.



Your **liver** is a large organ in the top right part of your tummy. It does lots of important jobs. It

- cleans your blood
- makes and keeps substances your body needs.



Virus is the name for the germs that make an infection happen.

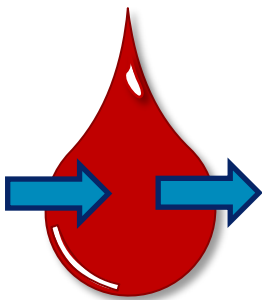
About blood transfusions



When blood is **donated** for **blood transfusions**, it needs to be tested to make sure it does not contain infections.



Donated means something that is given for free.

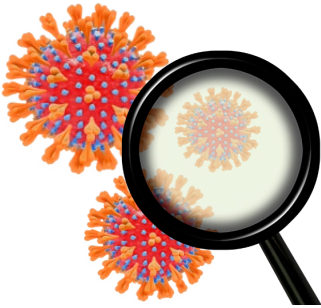


A **blood transfusion** is when blood from one person, called a **donor**, is given to another person who needs it.

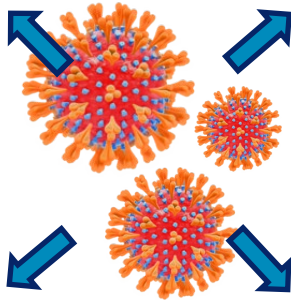


If you had hepatitis B before, you should not donate blood.

About the anti-hepatitis B core test



Tests are already done to look for **active** hepatitis B infection in donated blood.



Active means an infection that is alive and growing.



We have added an extra test to look for hepatitis B infection that is not active in donated blood.

Anti-HBc

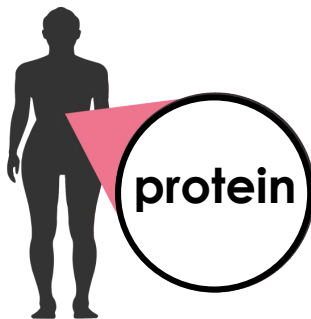
The test is called an **anti-hepatitis B core test**, or **anti-HBc test** for short.



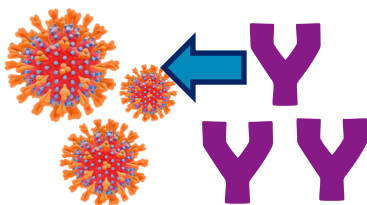
The anti-HBc test looks for **antibodies** against hepatitis B.



Antibodies are a type of **protein** your body makes to fight infection.



Proteins are an important part of what your body is made of and what it needs to work properly.



When you have antibodies against an infection it means you had the infection before.



If you get a **positive anti-HBc test result**, it means you had hepatitis B before.



What does it mean if I cleared the hepatitis B infection?



Cleared the infection means your body got rid of the germs that made the infection happen.



If you got a positive anti-HBc test result and negative test results for other hepatitis B tests, it means you are **only anti-HBc positive**.



Most people who are only anti-HBc positive had hepatitis B before but cleared the infection.



If I cleared the hepatitis B infection, do I need to do anything?



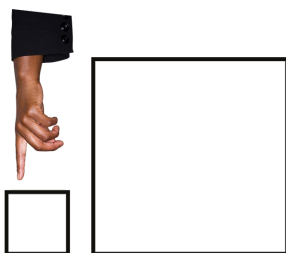
If you are only anti-HBc positive and cleared the infection, it means you cannot pass the infection to anyone else.



You should not have health problems because you had hepatitis B.



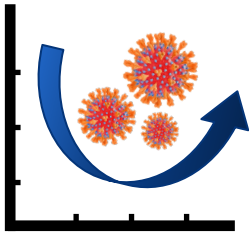
You do not need to see your doctor or go to the hospital.



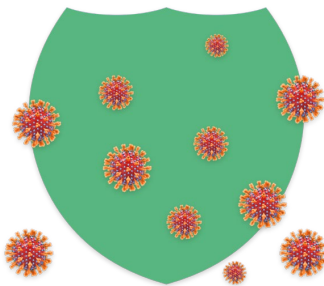
There is a small **risk** the hepatitis B virus could **reactivate** if your **immunity** to the infection gets weaker.



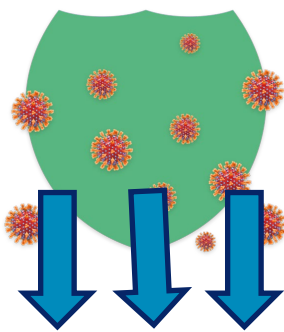
Risk means how likely it is something will happen.



Reactivate means become active again.



Immunity is when your body can protect itself against an illness.



Your immunity might get weaker because of other health problems you have or medicines you take, like treatments for illnesses called

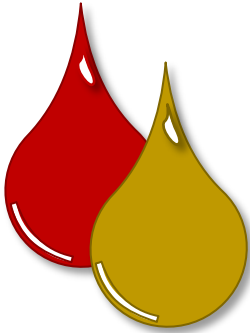
- cancer
- rheumatoid arthritis
- inflammatory bowel disease.



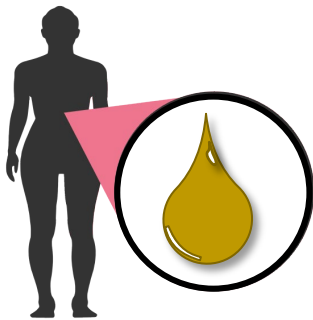
If you start any of these treatments, your doctor or nurse might also give you treatment for hepatitis B to stop the virus reactivating.



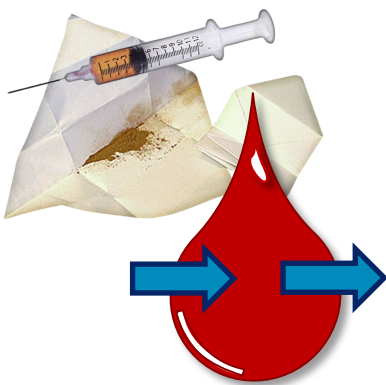
How did I get hepatitis B?



Hepatitis B can be passed from one person to another person by blood and **body fluids**.



Body fluids are liquids your body makes, like wee, mucus or semen.



Hepatitis B can be passed from one person to another person when you do things like

- get a piercing or a tattoo
- share needles to take drugs
- get close in a sexual way
- get a blood transfusion.



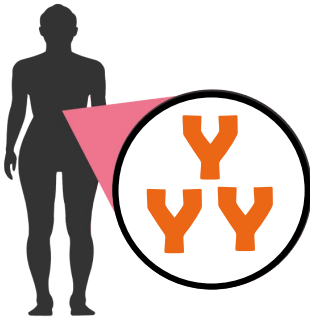
It can also be passed from pregnant mother to baby.



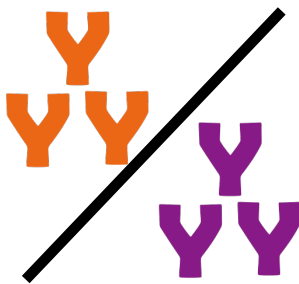
Did I get a positive anti-HBc test result because I had the hepatitis B vaccine?



A **vaccine** is a medicine that protects you against an illness.



When you have the hepatitis B vaccine, your body makes antibodies that protect you against the hepatitis B virus.



The antibodies your body makes because of the vaccine are different from the antibody the anti-HBc test looks for.



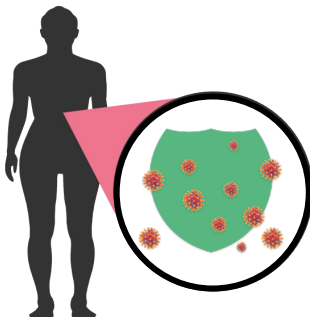
This means you will not get a positive anti-HBc test result because you had the hepatitis B vaccine.



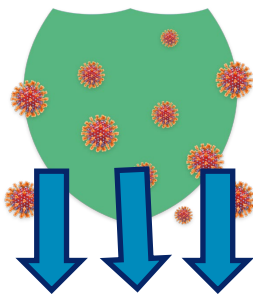
If I am a Health Care Worker and I get a positive anti-HBc test result, do I need to do anything?



If you do work called **Exposure Prone Procedures** and your **immune system** is weak or might become weak, tell your Occupational Health Department.



Your **immune system** is how your body fights infections.



Your immune system might become weak because of health problems you have or medicines you take.



If you do not do work called Exposure Prone Procedures, you do not need to do anything.



Do people I've had contact with need to do anything?



If you cleared the hepatitis B infection, people you've had contact with do not need to do anything.



This includes people you

- live with
- have been close to in a sexual way.



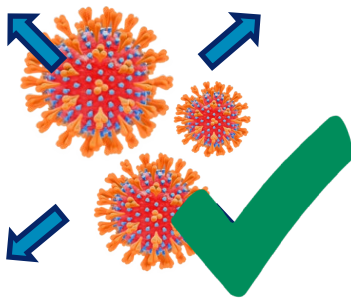
If you've told someone about your positive anti-HBc test result and they are worried, they need to contact their doctor or sexual health service.



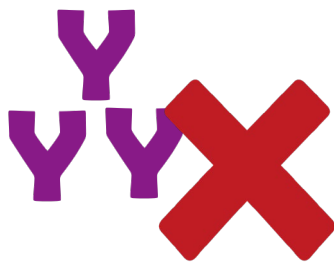
When I was pregnant, I got a negative hepatitis B test result. Why is my anti-HBc test result positive?



Tests done when you are pregnant are called **antenatal** tests.



Antenatal tests look for active hepatitis B infection in your blood because this can be passed to your baby.



Antenatal tests do not look for antibodies against hepatitis B.



If you cleared the hepatitis B infection before you were pregnant, your antenatal test result will be negative, but your anti-HBc test result will be positive.



If I want to get pregnant, do I need to do anything about my positive anti-HBc test result?



If you clear the hepatitis B infection before you get pregnant, you cannot pass it to your baby.



You do not need to do anything.



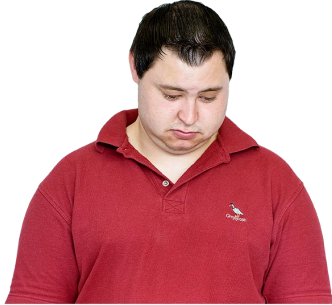
If I have anti-HBc antibodies, am I protected from the hepatitis B virus?



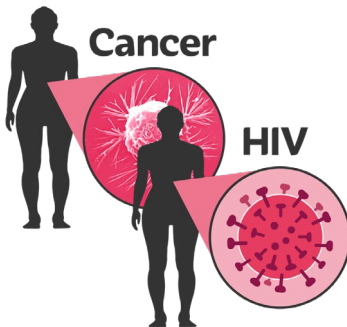
If you are healthy, the anti-HBc antibody your body made when you cleared the infection will protect you against getting the Hepatitis B virus again.



If I have an underlying health problem, what does a positive anti-HBc test result mean for me?



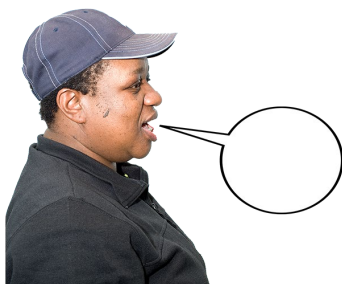
Underlying health problems are bad health problems that affect your daily life and need medical care all the time or for more than 1 year.



Underlying health problems are illnesses like cancer or HIV.



If you have an underlying health problem, your doctor should check if you had hepatitis B before.



You should tell your doctor about your positive anti-HBc test result.

About this booklet



If you need this document in a different format

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- or call this telephone number
0131 275 6000



If you want this booklet in **British Sign Language** (called **BSL** for short), go to the **Contact Scotland BSL** website
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This booklet was made with

- **Public Health Scotland**
- **SNBTS** which is part of
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The full version of this document is called
FAQs for those diagnosed as Hepatitis B core positive