

Consent and confidentiality

In your discussions with your patient, you need to ensure they are well informed of the testing process, and you must obtain their informed consent to proceed with testing. You have an opportunity to educate your patient on how to prevent HCV transmission, and assure them of your confidentiality through the discussion.

Gaining informed consent

- Inform the patient of your confidentiality and alleviate any anxiety they have regarding this
- Enquire about their motivation for getting tested
- Provide clear, appropriate information about HCV, including natural history and modes of transmission
- Explain the process of testing, window period and possibility of indeterminate results
- Discuss benefits of early detection
- Assess their ability to cope with positive result and social supports
- Supply written material about HCV (excellent resources for patients are available from your state/territory Hepatitis Council; see list available at <http://www.hepatitisaustralia.com/>)

Conveying test results

- Always give test results in person where possible
- Explain the meaning of the result and discuss immediate implications for the patient
- Avoid overloading the person with information
- Provide emotional support
- Reinforce education about transmission prevention and harm reduction
- Allow adequate time to answer the patient's questions
- Advise on aspects of positive status disclosure
- Arrange any further tests and offer follow-up as required
- Supply written material and contact details for relevant support services such as your state/territory Hepatitis Council (see list available at <http://www.hepatitisaustralia.com/>), and/or your state-territory peer-based drug users' organisation (see list available at www.aivl.org.au)