

CDC/CSTE Hepatitis C Case Definitions

Acute Hepatitis C:

Clinical case definition

An acute illness with:

- Discrete onset of symptoms (such as nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea) **and**
- Jaundice or abnormal serum aminotransferase levels

Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

- Serum alanine aminotransferase levels greater than 7 times the upper limit of normal, **and**
- IgM antibody to hepatitis A virus (IgM anti-HAV) negative, **and**
- IgM antibody to hepatitis B core antigen (IgM anti-HBc) negative, or if not done, hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) negative, **and**

One of the following:

- Antibody to hepatitis C virus (anti-HCV) screening-test-positive verified by an additional more specific assay (e.g., recombinant immunoblot assay [RIBA] for anti-HCV or nucleic acid testing for hepatitis C virus [HCV] RNA), **or**
- Anti-HCV screening-test-positive with a signal-to-cut-off ratio predictive of a true positive as determined for the particular assay (e.g., ≥ 3.8 for the enzyme immunoassays).

Note for above: New testing platform chemiluminescence immunoassay (VITROS anti-HCV assay) data not available yet to calculate signal to cut-off ratio.

Case classification

Confirmed: A case that meets the clinical case definition and is laboratory confirmed.

Chronic Hepatitis C:

Clinical description

Most hepatitis C virus (HCV) infected persons are asymptomatic. However, many have chronic liver disease, which can range from mild to severe including cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

- Anti-HCV positive (repeat reactive) by EIA, verified by an additional more specific assay (e.g. RIBA for anti-HCV or nucleic acid testing for HCV RNA), **or**
- HCV RIBA positive, **or**
- Nucleic acid test for HCV RNA positive, **or**
- Anti-HCV positive (repeat reactive) by EIA with a signal-to-cut-off ratio ≥ 3.8 (as this becomes available).

Case classification

Probable: a case that is anti-HCV positive (repeat reactive) by EIA and has alanine aminotransferase (ALT or SGPT) values above the upper limit of normal, but the anti-HCV EIA result has not been verified by an additional more specific assay **or** the signal-to-cut-off ratio is unknown.

Confirmed: a case that is laboratory confirmed and that does not meet the case definition for acute hepatitis C.