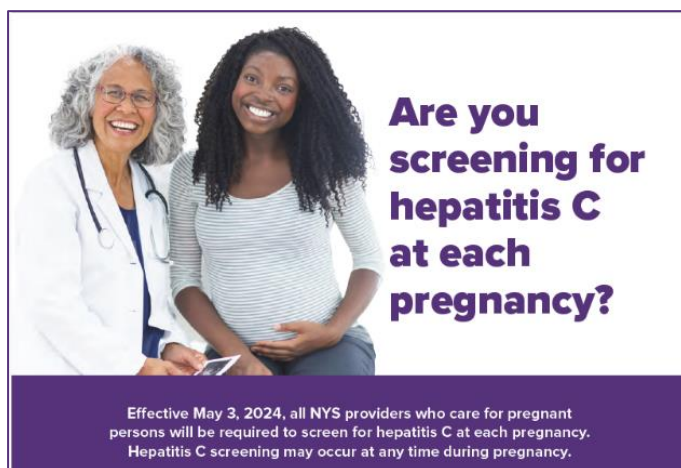


Hepatitis C Screening During Pregnancy

Provider Toolkit - November 2023

Introduction and Purpose

This toolkit was developed to assist prenatal care and maternity settings with implementing the requirement of hepatitis C virus (HCV) screening of pregnant people, and linkage to care for those with diagnosed HCV infection. HCV screening is part of New York State's [Hepatitis C Elimination Plan](#). Information about the number of new HCV diagnoses each year and specific metrics related to HCV elimination can be found on the NYS [HCV Elimination Dashboard](#).



The toolkit provides impacted health care facilities, and the providers who work in them, with an overview of NYS requirements for HCV screening of pregnant people. It provides links to clinical guidance, resources, shares best practices, and information about how to request additional technical assistance. HCV is a bloodborne pathogen that is spread by contact with blood from an infected person. HCV can be transmitted from a pregnant person to their infant during pregnancy or delivery, with a rate of transmission of approximately 6%. HCV among the US obstetric population rose nearly 10-fold over the last 20 years. Because of the association of HCV infection risk with current or past injection drug use, this toolkit provides important information about pregnancy and substance use, with a focus on providing affirming services for all pregnant people and their infants. This toolkit will be updated as new developments and best practices emerge.

Email hepatabc@health.ny.gov for the latest version and to request technical assistance.

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Overview of New York State Requirement for Hepatitis C Screening of Pregnant People

New York State Law, and current clinical practice guidelines require that a hepatitis C virus (HCV) screening test be provided to every pregnant person during each pregnancy.

CONDUCT TESTING & DOCUMENT IN THE MEDICAL RECORD

- Every physician or other authorized practitioner, including midwives, shall order HCV screening for every pregnant person, with clinical benefit for testing as early as possible in the pregnancy.
- HCV testing is conducted under general medical consent. No special consent is required.
- The result should be prominently displayed in the medical record at or before the time of hospital admission for delivery.

CONFIRMATORY TESTING & LINKAGE TO CARE

- If the HCV screening test result is reactive, or positive, the health care provider must make sure an HCV RNA test is conducted on the same sample or second sample collected at the same time.
- If the person tested is diagnosed with HCV, the health care provider must either offer the person follow-up HCV health care and treatment, or they must refer the person to a health care provider who can.

An effective approach to meeting this requirement is to include the HCV test as part of the prenatal screening panel.

WHAT IS THE TESTING ALGORITHM FOR HEPATITIS C?

Current guidance recommends a two-step testing sequence for diagnosis HCV infection. Testing is initiated with an HCV antibody test. When this test is reactive, an HCV RNA test is performed to confirm diagnosis of current infection. CDC recommends single-visit sample collection and use of laboratory reflex RNA testing to support complete testing for HCV. [See HCV Screening Protocol.](#)

CLINICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH RATIONALE

New cases of HCV are on the rise, particularly among reproductive age adults. Most new infections occur among adults 20-39 years of age. HCV among pregnant people has increased over the last decade.

- Most people with HCV have no symptoms. Almost half of people with HCV are unaware of their infection. If left untreated, HCV can lead to serious liver disease and/or death.
- Screening pregnant people for HCV has a [grade B rating](#) from the US Preventive Services Task Force.
- More than 90% of people with HCV can be treated and cured with 8–12 weeks of oral therapy. Though treatment is not currently FDA approved during pregnancy, it may be considered on an individual basis based on provider/ patient discussion about risks and benefits.
- Approximately 6% perinatally exposed children (*i.e.*, those coming into contact with the virus during pregnancy or delivery) will acquire perinatal HCV infection.
- Prenatal testing alerts delivery room staff to take measures to reduce risk of exposure during delivery.
- Perinatally exposed infants should be screened with an HCV RNA test at 2-6 months.

CASE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- Reporting of suspected, or confirmed, HCV is mandated under the New York State Sanitary Code (10NYCRR 2.10). This includes patients with a reactive or positive HCV screening test and/or a detectable HCV RNA test.
- Reports should be made to the local health department in the county in which the patient resides, and they need to be submitted within 24 hours of diagnosis. Information on how to report is available [here](#).
- Providers may be contacted by local health departments for additional information and should provide requested information promptly.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR HCV SCREENING DURING PREGNANCY

Medicaid and Medicare currently cover HCV screening for all adults and people at risk.

People with private insurance should refer to their policy or contact their carrier to see if the test is covered.

Billing Codes for HCV Testing

Test Type	CPT Code
HCV antibody test	86803
HCV RNA Qualitative	87521
HCV RNA Quantitative	87522

MEDICAID UPDATES (Click on links for detailed information)

1. Coverage for pregnant individuals during the post-partum period is [increased from 60 days to 12 months](#), making HCV screening during pregnancy an important opportunity to identify future care needs for both the pregnant person and their baby.
2. [HCV testing](#), including initial antibody and RNA tests, are covered under Medicaid Managed Care Plans and Medicaid Fee for Service.
3. Laboratories will be [reimbursed for reflex testing](#) (see page 13-14 of the linked document) without additional written orders from the physician. The preprinted requisition form must indicate that the test will be used in the reflex algorithm.
4. [Removal of Prior Authorization](#) for HCV medications in most circumstances.
5. Circumstances where [Prior Authorization of HCV Agents is still required](#): re-treatment, for non-preferred drugs or compendia-supported diagnosis in history.

“New York State Requirement for Hepatitis C Screening During Pregnancy”
a podcast with
NYS Health Commissioner, James McDonald M.D.
Click [here](#) to listen.



To request free technical assistance and clinical training for implementing HCV screening and linkage to care for pregnant people and their infants:
Email hepatabc@health.ny.gov. See [Page 3](#) for more details.

Technical Assistance and Clinical Education

To request technical assistance, please email hepatabc@health.ny.gov.

Tailored technical assistance is available to support prenatal care and maternity settings with implementing the requirement of HCV screening of pregnant people, and linkage to care for those with diagnosed HCV infection.

Below are examples of the range of types of technical assistance available, in-person or virtually based on the needs and preference of the healthcare setting:

- Meet with facility and/or clinic leadership to identify specific needs, introduce this toolkit, and review resources available.
- Facilitate a one-hour hepatitis C clinical training(s) or advanced hepatitis C clinical training to meet specific needs of facility and staff (in-person or virtual).
- Support to develop/implement an internal referral workflow for adult and pediatric patients who are diagnosed with HCV.
- Assistance to identify individuals within the facility who provide HCV treatment (including pediatrician/neonatologist) and create a process for patients who screen positive to go directly to an internal treatment provider.
- Ensure preparation for influx of patients identified with adoption of universal screening (e.g., training for specialists).
- Support to develop/implement policies and procedures, EMR prompts, workflows and reflex testing, as needed.
- Support to create an evaluation plan to allow for data-driven decision making and responsive programs.
- Assistance to identify available data and tailor recommendations for process and outcome indicators (i.e., Number pregnant people screened during XX period /Number screened during same period with goal of 100%).

Clinical Education

The Clinical Education Initiative (CEI)'s Hepatitis C and Drug User Health Center of Excellence offers free continuing medical education to enhance the capacity of New York State's diverse healthcare workforce to deliver high-quality clinical services and improve patient outcomes. CEI offers online live and on-demand trainings, intensive preceptorship programs, targeted technical assistance, free clinical tools and more.

The following courses are currently offered on demand by the Hepatitis C and Drug User Health Center of Excellence. Information, including course descriptions, learning objectives and online course recordings can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlinked course title.

[Hepatitis C Testing and Pre-treatment Evaluation](#)

[Universal Hepatitis C Screening among Pregnant Persons to Reduce Stigma and Advance Elimination*](#)

[Hepatitis C among Women of Childbearing Age](#)

[Hepatitis C among Infants, Children and Adolescents*](#)

[Hepatitis C and Alcohol*](#)

[Hepatitis C and Injection Drug Use*](#)

[Plans of Safe Care \(POSC\): Developing Plans of Safe Care with a Patient-Centered Approach*](#)

[Caring for Pregnant Persons with Substance Use Disorder: Shifting from Criminalization to Chronic Disease Management](#)

[Substance Use, Pregnancy and Parenting: A Harm Reduction Approach](#)

(*) accredited for Continuing Medical Education (CME), Continuing Nursing Education (CNE) and/or Continuing Pharmacy Education (CPE) credit

Additional trainings offered by CEI's Hepatitis C and Drug User Health Center of Excellence can be found at www.ceitraining.org. You may view the [Training Calendar](#), search the Courses tab for HCV, or select [CEI's Learning Pathways](#). All courses offered by the Hepatitis C and Drug User Health Center of Excellence can be provided via in-person or virtual delivery formats. To request a training, complete the [Training Intake Survey](#).

Podcasts

[One Step Closer: Introducing the New York State Hepatitis C Elimination Plan \(podcast\)](#)

(25 min, released February 2022)

[Universal Hepatitis C Screening among Pregnant Persons: The Time is Now \(podcast\)](#)

(28 min, released October 2022)

[New York State Requirement for Hepatitis C Screening During Pregnancy: Dr. James McDonald, the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health \(video\)](#)

(4min, released November 2023)

Clinical Support

CEI Line is available for clinical inquiries related to hepatitis C, drug user health, HIV, sexually transmitted infections, PEP and PrEP. Clinical providers can **call 866-637-2342** and **press 5** to speak with a clinical expert about hepatitis C screening, treatment, and recommended clinical follow-up for persons with hepatitis C in New York State.

HCV Clinical Guidelines

New York State Clinical Guidelines

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) AIDS Institute (AI) Clinical Guidelines Program is a collaborative effort of the AI Office of the Medical Director and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases. The program produces and publishes evidence-based, state-of-the-art clinical practice guidelines that establish uniform standards of care for NYS to improve the health and well-being of all adults who receive prevention services or treatment for HIV, viral hepatitis, other sexually transmitted infections, and substance use disorders.

[Hepatitis C Virus Screening, Testing, and Diagnosis in Adults](#)

[Treatment of Chronic Hepatitis C Virus Infection in Adults](#)

[HCV Testing and Management in Pregnant Adults](#)

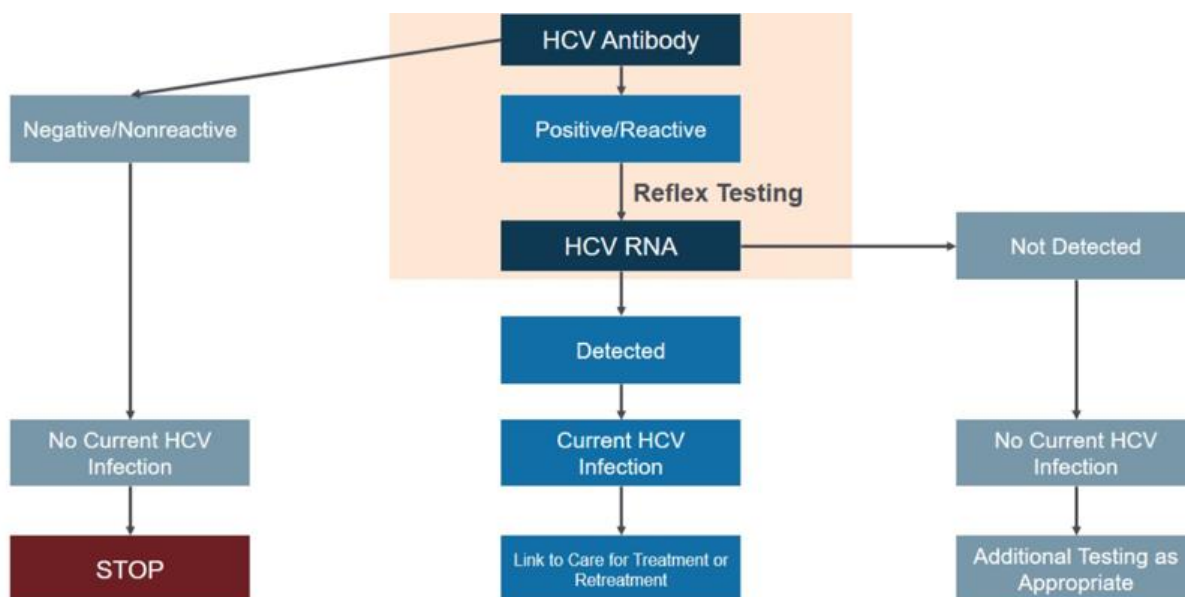
National Guidelines

[AASLD/Infectious Diseases Society of America \(IDSA\) HCV Guidance: Recommendations for Testing, Managing, and Treating Hepatitis C](#)

[The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists Clinical Practices Guidelines: Viral Hepatitis in Pregnancy](#)

[CDC Recommendations for Hepatitis C Testing Among Perinatally Exposed Infants and Children — United States, 2023](#)

HCV Screening Protocol from American Association for the Study of Liver Disease



AASLD, American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases.
Ghanv MG, et al. Hepatology. 2020;71:696-721.

BEST PRACTICE: Streamlined Sample Collection and Laboratory Procedures for HCV Screening and Diagnosis

Collecting Samples at a Single Visit

Current guidance for completion of HCV testing supports operational strategies that collect samples at a single visit, and automatic HCV RNA testing on all HCV antibody reactive samples. Use of strategies that require multiple visits to collect samples should be discontinued.

Resource: [Updated Operational Guidance for Implementing CDC’s Recommendations on Testing for Hepatitis C Virus Infection](#) (2023)

Check with your laboratory for sample collection guidelines.

Lab Order Sets

Inclusion of HCV antibody screening test with reflex to HCV RNA testing in prenatal lab order sets can help increase HCV screening rates during pregnancy.

Below are examples of lab order sets from two commercial labs.

Lab	Panel	Link to Details
LabCorps	Pregnancy, Initial Screening Profile	144053
Quest Diagnostics	Obstetric Panel with Fourth Generation HIV, Hepatitis C Antibody with Reflex	12075

Remove Outdated Order Options

Remove any reference to lab order options for standalone HCV Antibody Testing (i.e. testing that does not include specific reference to reflex HCV RNA testing).

BEST PRACTICE: Use of Electronic Medical Record (EMR) or Electronic Health Record (EHR) Macros to Streamline Documentation

[EMR/EHR macros](#), sometimes referred to as Smart phrases, Dot phrases or Quick phrases (depending on the EMR or EHR used) are tools that can be used to help providers document more efficiently by pulling in frequently used text and pulling data from the chart. These typically include a preformed block of text that is inserted using keyboard shortcuts, often preceded by a dot. Most EMR/EHRs have this capability, both for organization-level and individual user-created content.

Sample EMR/EHR Macros	
<u>Perinatal HCV Exposure</u>	Perinatal Hepatitis C exposure: The baby needs Hepatitis C RNA testing at 2-6 months of age by the (insert name) Hepatology team. The team has been emailed with the family's contact information and they will reach out to the family shortly to introduce themselves and the program. They will contact the family closer to 2-6 months of age as well to schedule the HCV testing. Contact information is (insert your contact name and number).
<u>Hepatitis C – Obstetrics Note</u>	<p>Age, parity, with ... Dated by Last Menstrual Period; dates confirmed by ultrasound</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clinical Assessment - HCV HCV quan RNA HepB surface Antigen/Antibody Hepatitis A Ab IgG Liver ultrasound 2. Co-morbid condition Substance Use Alcohol use HIV STIs 3. Counseling provided re: risk of sexual transmission as well as risk of mother to child (MTC) HCV transmission. Patient counseled that MTC transmission was ~ 6% and (i) there was no standard of care to provide treatment with anti-virals to prevent MTC transmission, and (ii) there were no proven benefits of c-section to prevent MTC transmission. Patient counseled that the decision to treat during pregnancy, both for the prevention of MTC transmission and maternal health, will be made with each patient after a review of all test results and additional counseling. 4. Counseling provided re: association of HCV infection with an increased risk of intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy. 5. Counseling provided that HCV can be cured with antiviral treatment and that they will be referred post-delivery to a liver specialist. 6. Limit exposure of fetus intrapartum to maternal blood/body secretions. Avoid early amniotomy or scalp clips.

HCV Care and Treatment Resources

[NYSDOH AIDS Institute Provider Directory](#)

The New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute's online directory provides information regarding participating hepatitis C providers across New York State. Participation in the directory is voluntary. Inclusion in this directory does not confer any endorsement by the NYSDOH nor does it establish NYSDOH credentialing or certification in a specialty.

[Hepatitis C Care and Treatment Programs Supported by the NYSDOH](#)

The New York State Department of Health provides funding to 13 primary care sites across NYS to provide Hepatitis C care and treatment. In addition to primary care, these providers offer HCV related services including HCV treatment, education, care coordination, and support connecting with community resources.

[NYC Health Map](#) can be used to locate health services in New York City by address, zip code or borough, including available HCV testing, treatment, and harm reduction services. Additionally, locations offering free and low-cost hepatitis C testing and treatment, as well as patient navigators who can provide support throughout the process can be found at www.nyc.gov/health/hepc.

[Treatment In Pregnancy for Hepatitis C: The TiP-HepC Registry](#) collects and documents the outcomes of mother-infant pairs exposed to HCV treatment during pregnancy from routine clinical practice in hepatitis treatment programs and treatment centers worldwide. The project aims to describe the frequency and timing of known cases of women exposed to treatment during pregnancy, assess the safety of treatment in pregnancy for mother-infant pairs, and evaluate the effectiveness of treatment in pregnancy for achieving cure for mothers and reducing transmission to their infants. This project is an initiative of the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination (CGHE) at the Taskforce for Global Health and supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

HCV Screening and Identification of Substance Use Among Pregnant People:

A Brief Summary of Key Points to Consider

Required HCV screening increases the likelihood that a pregnant person's past or current substance use will come to the attention of the health care provider. Providers should avoid making assumptions about a person's use, which may range from one occasion of past use to current dependency. Regardless of use, health care providers should recognize that individuals are doing their best, in the context of their lives, to have a healthy pregnancy and baby. Focus should be on meeting each person in an affirming manner.

What does it mean to provide affirming services to pregnant people who use drugs and their infants?

Pregnant people who use drugs often experience stigma that serves as a disincentive to engage in care. Efforts that support engagement in care promote better health outcomes for the pregnant person and their infant and are consistent with the ethical standards of the practice of medicine. Providing affirming care is something that should be a focus for all members of the care team: prescribers, nursing, social services, receptionists, and billing. Providing affirming services means holding every individual in unconditional positive high regard. Important practices include:

- Avoiding the use of [stigmatizing language](#) and using person-first language.
- Using [motivational interviewing](#) to build trust and identify options for improving health that meet the patient where they are in their life.
- Providing [trauma-informed care](#).

Plan of Safe Care

A [Plan of Safe Care \(POSC\)](#) is a tool that can be used to support individuals or families impacted by substance use or taking medications to treat substance use disorders. The purpose of developing a POSC with a family is to ensure that families are receiving comprehensive support, care, and treatment that meets their needs. A POSC is a document which identifies how a provider, family, and community can support the safety and well-being of the newborn and person who gave birth. A POSC should be personalized and can address basic needs, identify support systems, and create linkages to necessary services and/or community-based organizations as appropriate.

A POSC should be developed for pregnant individuals who:

- are diagnosed with a substance use disorder; or
- are receiving medication for addiction treatment (MAT) for a substance use disorder; or
- are under the care and supervision of a healthcare provider who has prescribed opioids

Pregnant individuals are also encouraged to bring the POSC with them to the hospital or birth center. Discharge instructions for families impacted by substance use should include a reference to following the POSC. For pregnant or birthing individuals affected by substance use who do not have a POSC, or if the existing POSC does not include services for the newborn, the post-birth discharge plan serves as the start of a POSC and should include a warm linkage to appropriate community-based supports, healthcare or other providers to further develop the POSC. This is consistent with 10 NYCRR 405.9(f), which requires hospitals to link patients impacted by substance use to appropriate services at discharge. For more information about this requirement, please see [DAL 18-13](#).

Drug Treatment Options For Pregnant and Postpartum Individuals

Pregnant and post-partum individuals with current or past substance use may benefit from discussions and referrals to drug and alcohol treatment. There are safe treatment options for substance use disorders involving different classes of drugs. NYS Office of Addiction Supports and Services (OASAS) [prioritize pregnant people](#) for access to treatment.

Drug Testing of Pregnant People

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends universal **verbal screening** for substance use during pregnancy; They **do not recommend routine toxicology testing during pregnancy and delivery, or for the newborn**. Toxicology testing should only be performed when medically indicated as part of the work up for the pregnant individual and infant to determine the appropriate medical treatment.

Avoiding Opioid Overdose

Both pregnant and post-partum persons should be educated about the risk of opioid overdose, educated on overdose prevention and provided with naloxone or educated about [how to obtain it](#). Pregnant and post-partum persons with substance use and/or substance use disorder should be supported with wraparound, community-based services to help them navigate this potentially challenging time.

Care for an Alcohol or Substance-Exposed Newborn

Some infants born to pregnant people who use alcohol or substances may require assessment and special care. Hospitals and birthing centers should have policies to care for newborns who:

- Display symptoms of substance withdrawal **and** have a positive toxicology screen
- Receive a diagnosis of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)
- Receive a diagnosis of a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Breast-Chest Feeding

Decisions around breast/chestfeeding, use of formula, or both, are very personal. Respect for personal choice is important during conversations about infant feeding. Information on medications and their safety during pregnancy and lactation can be found at [LactMed](#).

Child Protective Services

- **Substance use alone**, whether disclosed through development of a POSC, self-report, screening, toxicology, or newborn symptoms, **is not evidence of child maltreatment**.
- When there is **reasonable cause**, beyond substance use, to suspect a child is at risk of abuse or maltreatment, hospitals and birth centers should continue to follow existing policies and protocols for making a report to the Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR).

Pain Control

Providing affirming care for pregnant people who use drugs includes acknowledging that they experience the same level of post-partum pain as any other post-partum individual. It is important to work with each individual to establish a plan for pain control that meets their needs and individual circumstances.

Resources

[Pregnancy and Substance Use: A Harm Reduction Toolkit](#)

[NYS CAPTA CARA Information and Resources](#)

[CAPTA CARA Dear Colleague Letter](#)

[Substance Use Disorder in Pregnancy Position Statement](#)

[National Institute on Drug Abuse: Words Matter – Terms to Use and Avoid When Talking About Addiction](#)

[National Institute on Drug Abuse: Your Words Matter – Language Showing Compassion and Care for Women, Infants, Families, and Communities Impacted by Substance Use Disorder](#)

[National Institute on Drug Abuse: Preferred Language for Talking About Addiction](#)

Educational Materials to HCV Testing During Pregnancy

The New York State Department of Health offers limited quantities of free educational materials to New York State residents and organizations.

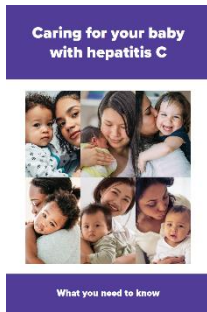
- No more than 10 different publications may be ordered at a time.
- You may order up to 200 copies of each (up to 10 copies for posters) or provide details on why more are needed.
- For fastest delivery, please list items in numerical order by code number. These orders will be processed first.
- Bulk orders cannot be delivered to post office box numbers.





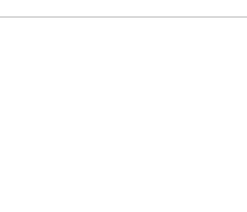

Complete this [form](#) including the requested publication title and publication number, language and quantity requested. Email the completed form to OGS.SM.GDC@OGS.NY.GOV

Materials for Consumers

To view or print consumer education materials click on the blue links below for each material.

Title	Language	Publication #
NYS Hepatitis C Testing Requirements: Consumer Fact Sheet This 2-page fact sheet for consumers provides information about hepatitis C screening in New York and the meaning of the results. 9/2023	English	1821
	Spanish	Coming soon
Protect yourself. Protect your baby (Consumer postcard) – This 2-sided postcard aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people and follow-up testing for infants exposed to hepatitis C during pregnancy and birth. 9/2023	English	16140
	Spanish	Coming soon
Caring for Your Baby with Hepatitis C – What you need to know – This 8-page booklet provides information for caregivers about the follow-up care needed for infants exposed to hepatitis C during pregnancy and birth. 10/2023	English	21432
	Spanish	Coming soon



Title	Language	Publication #
<p>Protect Your Baby and Yourself – Poster</p> <p>This 11x17 poster aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people. 9/2023</p>	 <p>English</p>	<p>21420</p>
<p>Protect Your Baby and Yourself – Poster</p> <p>This 11x17 poster aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people. 9/2023</p>	 <p>Spanish</p>	<p>Coming soon</p>
<p>Protect Your Baby and Yourself – Poster</p> <p>This 11x17 poster aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people. 9/2023</p>	 <p>English</p>	<p>21422</p>
<p>Protect Your Baby and Yourself – Poster</p> <p>This 11x17 poster aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people. 9/2023</p>	 <p>Spanish</p>	<p>Coming soon</p>
<p>Protect Your Baby and Yourself – Poster</p> <p>This 11x17 poster aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people. 9/2023</p>	 <p>English</p>	<p>21423</p>
<p>Protect Your Baby and Yourself – Poster</p> <p>This 11x17 poster aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people. 9/2023</p>	 <p>Spanish</p>	<p>Coming soon</p>

Title	Language	Publication #
Protect Your Baby and Yourself – Poster This 11x17 poster aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people. 9/2023	English	21424
	Spanish	Coming soon



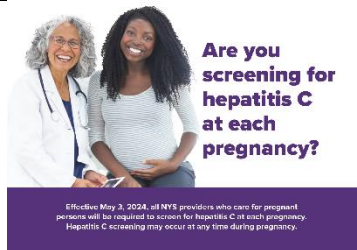
Protect Your Baby and Yourself – Poster This 11x17 poster aims to encourage hepatitis C testing among pregnant people. 9/2023	English	21425
	Spanish	Coming soon



Materials for Health Care Providers

Title	Language	Code #
New York State Requirements for Universal Hepatitis C Testing: Health Care Provider Fact Sheet - This 2- page fact sheet for health care providers reviews New York State hepatitis C screening requirements. 9/2023	English	1820

Are you screening for hepatitis C at each pregnancy?: Provider Postcard This 2-sided postcard alerts healthcare providers about the New York State hepatitis C screening requirements during pregnancy. 9/2023



English 16135

Additional Educational Resources

Additional information about the Test4HepC campaign can be found at: health.ny.gov/Test4HepC

More hepatitis C related consumer educational resources are available at: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/hepatitis/hepatitis_c/educational_materials.htm