

2/7/2024

*\*NOTICE: This health alert provides written guidance for health care professionals and others who may need to take action to prevent or control a notifiable condition. It is not intended to provide guidance for the general public.*

## Health Advisory: Test perinatally exposed children for Hepatitis C

### Actions Requested:

Be aware that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that providers test children born to people with:

- Detectable Hepatitis C virus (HCV) RNA
- Positive HCV antibody results and unknown HCV RNA status

Test perinatally exposed children between the ages of 2-6 months (up to 17 months) old with an HCV RNA test. Do not test children less than 18 months old for HCV antibodies (anti-HCV). Testing for HCV antibodies (anti-HCV) in children less than 18 months old can result in false positives because antibodies from the mother might last until this age. Ensure screening of pregnant individuals for HCV is completed during each pregnancy.

Give untested children older than 18 months an HCV antibody test with reflex to HCV RNA.

- Children with an undetectable HCV RNA result at or after 2 months old do not require follow-up unless clinically warranted.
- Refer children with detectable HCV RNA to a healthcare provider with expertise in pediatric hepatitis C management.

### Report Hepatitis C cases in pregnant people and the birth of an exposed infant.

Initial perinatal Hepatitis C diagnoses are notifiable to local health jurisdictions within 24 hours.

Complete the [Hepatitis C fax form](#) and fax it to Thurston County Public Health and Social Services.

### Background:

Perinatal hepatitis C is increasing. Rates of HCV infection during pregnancy in the United States increased 20% from 2016 to 2020. Approximately 6% to 7% of all perinatally exposed children will develop chronic HCV infection. Curative direct-acting antiviral (DAA) therapy can be started at 3 years old. Testing and identification of perinatally infected children, referral to care, and curative treatment are important steps to achieve hepatitis C elimination.

### Resources:

- [Washington State Department of Health's Hep C Free WA plan](#): This program strives to eliminate Hepatitis C in Washington by 2030.
- [Recommendations for hepatitis C testing among perinatally exposed children](#), CDC.
- [Algorithm for HCV testing of perinatally exposed children](#), CDC.
- [Algorithm for HCV testing of perinatally exposed children older than 18 months](#), CDC.
- [Diagnosis, monitoring, and management of HCV infection](#), University of Washington. Perinatal hepatitis.

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE UPDATE

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION SECTION  
THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
412 LILLY RD NE  
OLYMPIA, WA, 98506-5132  
DISEASE REPORTING: (360)786-5470  
[WWW.THURSTONCOUNTYWA.GOV/PHSS](http://WWW.THURSTONCOUNTYWA.GOV/PHSS)



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## THANK YOU FOR REPORTING

TO REPORT A NOTIFIABLE CONDITION IN THURSTON COUNTY	
Voice mail for reporting <b>non-immediately reportable conditions (24 hours a day):</b> <a href="http://thurstoncountywa.gov">Reporting a Notifiable Condition (thurstoncountywa.gov)</a>	Phone: <b>360-786-5470</b> Fax: 360-867-2601
<b>Day time immediately reportable conditions</b> – Calls are answered during business hours Monday-Friday 8am-5pm (excluding holidays) and routed to the appropriate communicable disease team member.	Phone: 360-867-2610 Secure eFax: 1-833-418-1916
<b>After hours immediately and 24-hour reportable conditions or a public health emergency</b>	Call 1-800-986-9050
No one is available with Thurston County Public Health and condition is <b>immediately notifiable or a public health emergency</b>	Call 1-877-539-4344

Communicable Disease Updates are posted online at: [Communicable Disease Updates \(thurstoncountywa.gov\)](http://thurstoncountywa.gov)