

What is a Blood Borne Virus?

Blood borne viruses (BBVs) are viruses transmitted when infected blood from one person comes into contact with blood from another person. The three most common BBVs are:

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C.

BBVs can be transmitted through:

- Sharing injecting equipment including needles, spoons, filters & water
- Snorting drugs or sharing tooters
- Unprotected sex (heterosexual or homosexual)
- Unsterile medical treatment or unsterile body piercing/tattoos
- Blood to blood contact from an infected person (e.g. in a fight)
- Mother to baby

HIV & Hep B are more common in men who have sex with men whilst Hep C is more common in drug users who have ever injected. Hep C is less likely to be transmitted during sex.

What are the symptoms?

You may experience flu-like symptoms around the time of infection though many people will not experience any symptoms and may remain well for a number of years. Over time HIV

destroys the body's immune system making it difficult to fight off infections whilst Hep B & C cause inflammation of the liver, which can lead to cirrhosis (scarring) and sometimes liver cancer.

Testing: What to Expect

At Crew you will be offered a confidential space to discuss testing, what this means for you and any concerns you have. The test itself is done by pricking the finger with a small needle and collecting a sample of blood on a special card. This sample is then sent to a laboratory for testing.

Results can take up to 10 days and you will be invited back to Crew to receive your result **in person**. We do not give results over the phone even if your tests show you don't have a BBV: we feel that it is always better to speak to someone face to face. That way we can give you advice about staying safe, provide you with free condoms if you want them, and give you support if you need it.

BBVs can take up to 3 months to show up in the blood and if you have been at risk within that time you'll be offered a follow up appointment to get retested. If you are put at risk again you should consider getting retested.



Benefits of Getting Tested

- Put your mind at rest!
- Be able to make positive lifestyle choices which benefit your health (e.g. getting support to reduce or stop alcohol use if you're infected with Hep B or C, lowering risk of increased liver damage).
- The sooner a virus is diagnosed, the easier and more successful the treatment.
- Although HIV is not curable, it's very treatable and lifelong treatment is often very successful.
- Prevent the infection spreading onto others by practicing safe sex and not sharing injecting equipment.
- Make choices about protecting your unborn child from contracting Hep B and HIV.

Treatment Options

Hepatitis C is a treatable condition. Standard treatment is now between 8-12 weeks depending on the type (or “genotype”) of virus you have. Success rate of treatment is currently 50-80%, depending on the genotype you have. If you’re tested for Hep C and the result shows you have an ongoing virus, we’ll refer you to specialists who will be able to determine your genotype and discuss treatment options with you.

Hep B – The majority of people clear the virus naturally but for those that don’t, Hep B is a lifelong but treatable condition. Treatment would depend on the amount of virus in your blood and you would be referred to a specialist to discuss this further. If your test shows you have previously had the virus and your body has naturally have cleared it, a vaccination can be offered to protect you from getting re-infected.

HIV is a lifelong condition however treatments aim to reduce the amount of infection in your blood which will minimise the damage to your immune system. If your test for HIV shows you have the virus, we will refer you onto a specialist who will take more blood from you to determine how much virus is in your blood and the amount of damage to your immune system. Based on these results, the specialist can discuss treatment options with you.

Our BBV testing service is normally available as a walk-in service at Crew’s Drop-in Shop on:

**Tues & Weds 1- 4.30pm
Thurs 3-6.30pm**

or

contact Lisa R (0131 220 3404) to book an appointment

APPOINTMENT

DATE: _____

TIME: _____



**32 Cockburn Street,
Edinburgh, EH1 1PB**

For more information contact:

Tel: 0131 220 3404

Email: admin@crew2000.org.uk

Learn more online: www.crew2000.org.uk

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Registered office: 32/32a Cockburn Street,
Edinburgh EH1 1PB

BBV Testing



Hep C, Hep B & HIV Testing

Information about
Crew’s testing service