

INFORMATION SHEET

FREE SCREENING FOR HEPATITIS C

Chronic HCV Hepatitis C is an infection that **gives no symptoms but is the leading cause of cirrhosis and cancer of the liver in Italy.**

Up until 2015, **one person died every 30 minutes in Italy** from the consequences of this disease. It is estimated that in Italy **about 1% to 1.5% of the population is affected**; in particular, in Lombardy, an estimated **150,000** people have HCV infection. However, many of these cases **remain undiagnosed.**

Today, fortunately, treatments are available with drugs that, administered orally for 8-12 weeks, lead to **recovery in more than 95 percent** of cases, with few side effects.

To make an **early diagnosis and take prompt action** against this infection, the Ministry of Health has promoted a screening campaign for Hepatitis C in all **individuals born between 1969 and 1989**, who have **never taken** latest-generation oral **drugs** for the treatment of Hepatitis (available since 2015) which Regione Lombardia has joined.

That's why members of the public accessing **the Testing Points and patients admitted to hospital** are offered screening if they fall into the above categories (born between 1969 and 1989, have never taken the above drugs).

The test consists of a **standard blood draw** (from peripheral vein) for **anti-HCV antibodies**, performed at the same time as routine blood tests. The test result will be delivered along with the routine test results.

The HCV screening test has the benefit of identifying patients with hepatitis C, thus enabling early diagnosis and starting them on treatment for the infection. Treatment of hepatitis C prevents the development of liver disease and its complications (cirrhosis, cancer of the liver).

If the test is positive you will be contacted to complete diagnostic updates.

If you would like any further information, please contact the health staff and see the attached brochure.