



HEPATITIS C

Information, advice, testing,
support & training service

VIRAL LOAD

The **viral load** test is really important for several reasons:

First: The **viral load test** will tell you *whether you still have the virus*, or whether you have cleared it.

Second: If you are a pregnant woman, the chances of passing the virus to your baby are very low; but if you are a pregnant woman with a **high viral load**, the chances of passing the virus to your baby are a little higher.

Third: If you decide to go on interferon treatment, **viral load tests before and during treatment** help the doctor to find out *if the treatment is working*, and how long to keep you on treatment.

Having a lot of virus (high viral load) does not mean that you will get sicker more quickly, but it may affect how well treatment will work.

If you have hepatitis C your doctor will do a lot of blood tests to find out exactly what is going on in the liver the viral load test is just one of these.

HCV is very active and makes lots of copies of itself. The viral load test is the only way to measure how much virus is present in the blood.

Viral loads can vary hugely from as low as 10 copies of the virus per 1ml of blood or as high as 25,000,000 copies per 1ml of blood.