

# CHRONIC HEPATITIS

## Patient Information

- You have chronic hepatitis:      B              C              Both
- Your hepatitis B viral load is \_\_\_\_\_
- Your hepatitis C viral load is \_\_\_\_\_
- Your hepatitis C genotype is:      1      2      3      4      5      6

**Chronic hepatitis is an ongoing infection of the liver, the gland in the upper part of the right side of your abdomen. The liver acts as a place for storing nutrition (sugars), a filter for toxins, an aid to digestion of food, and a producer of factors to keep you from bleeding severely. When you have chronic hepatitis, some or all of these functions may be impaired. Chronic hepatitis can lead to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), cancer of the liver, and even liver death.**

**Hepatitis B and C can be passed from one person to another by having unprotected sex, sharing needles, or from a mother to her child during pregnancy or at delivery. These viruses also used to be passed in blood transfusions; this rarely happens anymore since the blood supply is screened for them now. They can also be spread in other ways, such as getting a tattoo with a needle that has not been properly cleaned between uses.**

**Chronic hepatitis causes damage to your liver slowly over time, so you may feel fine even if your liver is being affected. Blood tests can be done to see if the chronic hepatitis is active in you but blood tests alone *cannot* tell you how much damage has been done to your liver. A liver biopsy may be needed to tell the amount of damage already done.**