# Detecting Hepatitis

New technology and innovative approaches may speed diagnosis of this liver virus.

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A total of 328 million people are living with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) worldwide. Yet most people with these serious forms of viral hepatitis are unaware they are infected, which can lead to serious liver complications, including organ failure, cancer and scarring.

This is why scientists are exploring a variety of ways to improve access to hepatitis testing. For example, alternative sampling methods, such as technology that evaluates saliva and dried blood spots, could increase testing and linkage to care as well as reach key target populations affected by hepatitis.

Self-tests and combined rapid diagnostic exams for diseases such as HBV, HCV and HIV also have the potential to improve screening for these illnesses, increase awareness and reduce related stigma in marginalized communities.

In the future, clinicians may also use mobile devices to test patients for hepatitis infection. What's more, testing and linking folks to care in a variety of nonmedical, community-based services settings could greatly reduce the large burden of undiagnosed hepatitis infection across the globe.

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