

Augusta Medical Group Welcomes Dr. Jessica Lewis



Jessica Lewis, MD
Infectious Disease

Augusta Health Infectious Disease

70 Medical Center Circle, Suite 107

Fishersville, VA 22939

Phone: (540) 245-7030

Please fax referrals to
(540) 245-7031

Medical School: University of Maryland School of Medicine

Residency: University of Virginia- Internal Medicine

Fellowship: University of Virginia- Infectious Disease

Honors/Awards: AOA, Excellence in Teaching Award, UVA Department of Medicine 2017

Dr. Jessica Lewis is accepting new patient referrals and has availability for patient appointments. Please reach out to Tamara Bennington

(TBennington@AugustaHealth.com) if you would like to connect with Dr. Jessica Lewis.



Hepatitis C Program

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a virus that causes inflammation of the liver. In more than 75% of cases, people who become infected with HCV will develop a chronic infection (lasting more than 6 months). Without treatment, chronic HCV infection will lead to cirrhosis in 15-20% of cases. In fact, chronic HCV infection is the leading cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer and the most common reason to need a liver transplant in the United States. Historically the treatments for chronic HCV infection were prolonged and poorly tolerated and resulted in cure in only 40-50% of cases. New treatment regimens, called direct acting antivirals (DAAs), are much better tolerated, and result in cure around 95% of the time, in only 8-12 weeks. Successful treatment of chronic HCV decreases one's risk of progression to liver fibrosis and cirrhosis, development of hepatocellular carcinoma, and liver-related mortality.

As of April 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that primary care providers screen all patients 18 years and older at least once in their lifetime for HCV infection. Patients with ongoing risk factors (such as injection drug use) should be tested routinely thereafter. This is a change from the prior recommendation to screen "baby boomers," i.e. adults born between 1945 and 1965. This change was made because new cases of HCV have been on the rise, particularly among younger adults, largely due to the opioid epidemic. In 2019, an estimated 63% of HCV infections occurred among adults 20-39 years of age.

The first test needed to screen your patients for HCV infection is the HCV antibody. If negative, no further testing is needed at that time. If positive, this indicates exposure to the virus at some point. HCV RNA PCR (or viral load) should be ordered next. If the viral load is detectable, this likely represents chronic infection.

Augusta Health Infectious Disease providers are experienced in treating chronic HCV infection. With **Dr. Jessica Lewis** joining the group in November 2021, we have expanded access and availability in our clinic. Once your patient is documented to have a detectable HCV RNA level, please send a referral to Augusta Health Infectious Disease clinic. We will schedule your patient to see a provider within 2-4 weeks. We will order all other necessary labs and imaging and will complete the paperwork needed to get insurance coverage or other payment assistance for DAA treatment. We will continue to see your patient in follow-up throughout their treatment course and until they have documented cure (sustained virologic response or SVR).