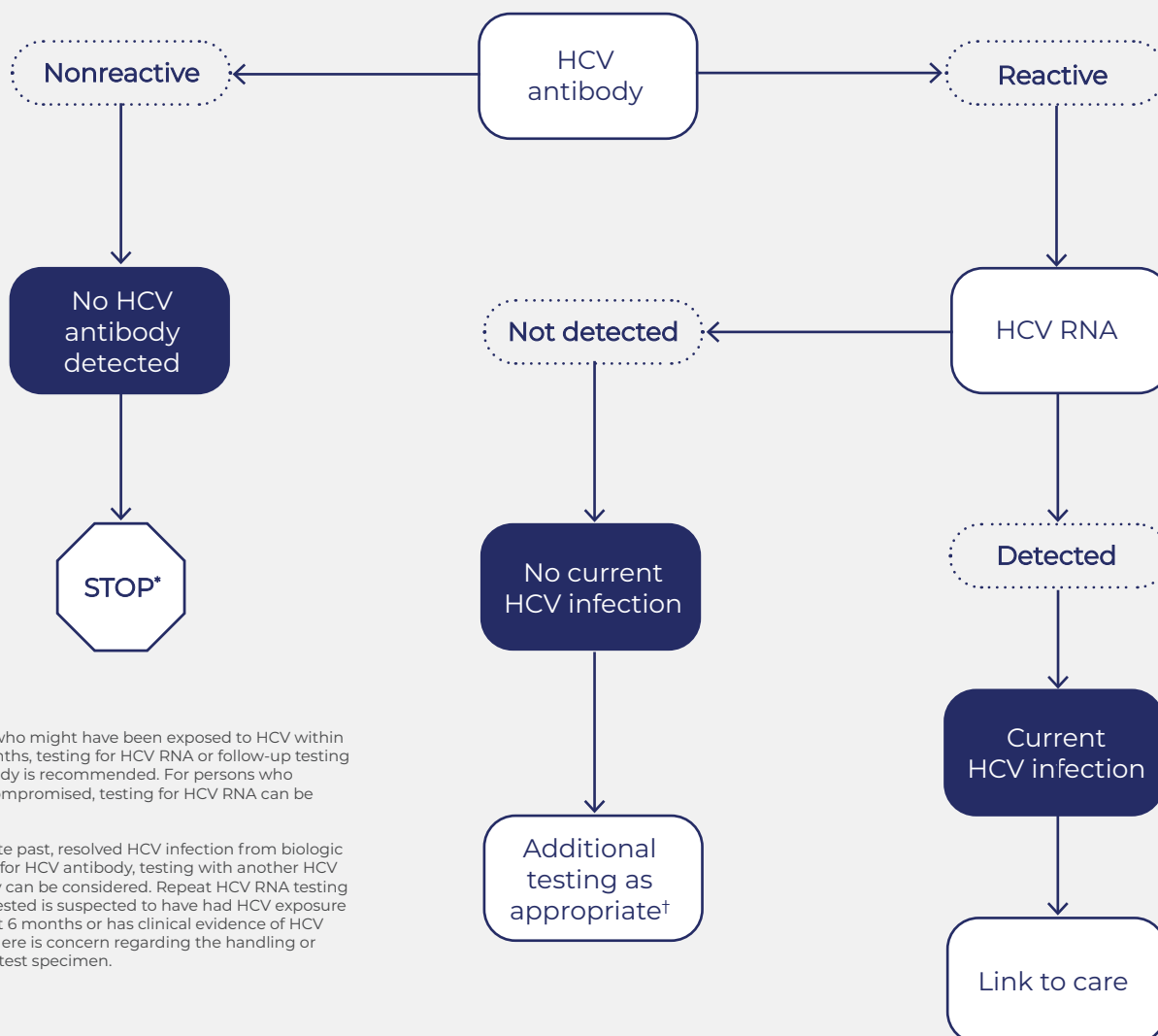


3. The same sample of venipuncture blood used for initial HCV antibody testing, if reactive, is reflexed for HCV RNA testing without another blood draw; and
4. A separate blood sample is submitted for HCV RNA testing if the initial testing of HCV antibody has used finger-stick blood. This blood sample should be collected at the same visit as the finger stick.

Operational strategies 2-4 allow for single-visit sample collection, which ensures that HCV RNA testing is performed automatically without requiring a separate health care visit. Operational strategy 1, however, requires two visits to a health care facility and therefore leased to missed opportunities for HCV diagnosis and linkage to curative HCV treatment.

OSDH recommends strategies 2 and 4 depending on the testing setting. Several studies show that the implementation of automatic HCV RNA testing increased the proportion of complete HCV testing.

Recommended Testing Sequence for Identifying Current Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Infection



* For persons who might have been exposed to HCV within the past 6 months, testing for HCV RNA or follow-up testing for HCV antibody is recommended. For persons who are immunocompromised, testing for HCV RNA can be considered.

† To differentiate past, resolved HCV infection from biologic false positivity for HCV antibody, testing with another HCV antibody assay can be considered. Repeat HCV RNA testing if the person tested is suspected to have had HCV exposure within the past 6 months or has clinical evidence of HCV disease, or if there is concern regarding the handling or storage of the test specimen.