

HIV testing as part of your antenatal care*

better for your baby

When you come for your antenatal care you will be asked to give a blood sample early in your pregnancy. Just one sample can be used for a number of tests **which will help your care and your baby's care.**

One of the tests we recommend is for HIV (Human Immune deficiency Virus), the virus which causes AIDS. This test is the only way to tell if you have the infection and so to get treatment for it. This is because you could be infected with HIV yet look and feel well - **most pregnant women who have HIV do not know.**

Knowing that you are infected with HIV while pregnant is important because HIV can be passed on from mother to baby. Without treatment one baby in six born to HIV infected mothers is likely to become infected. **With treatment this can be reduced to one in a hundred.**

* Advice from the Chief Medical Officer's Expert Advisory Group on ADR
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If I have HIV is it better for me to know now? **YES**

- * You can get treatment and support.
- * You will get specialist care. Staff in the clinic will work closely with the specialists treating your HIV.
- * You will have time to think about your choices for care and treatment during pregnancy and labour, including whether to continue with the pregnancy.
- * You can decide whether or not you want to breastfeed.
- * You will be offered counselling and support for yourself, and if you wish for your partner and family.
- * However, discovering you are HIV positive presents difficulties at any time.
- * We can put you in touch with groups who will help with family or practical problems.



Is knowing now better for my baby? **YES**

Yes it is possible to reduce the risk of your baby being infected:

- * with special treatment during pregnancy and birth
- * by choosing not to breastfeed
- * by giving the baby drug treatment for a few weeks after birth

Talk to your doctor or midwife. If you are infected with HIV, taking these steps makes it very unlikely that your baby will be infected.

The test result is confidential.

However, the result will normally be included in your medical records which will be seen by the doctors and midwives caring for you. Talk to your doctor or midwife if you are worried about this.

Talk to your doctor or midwife. He or she can answer any questions about having the test. There may be particular questions that you want to ask about your own situation. Your doctor or midwife may be able to answer these or can put you in touch with someone who can. Your doctor or midwife will then ask for your consent for your blood to be tested for HIV. **It is for you to decide** - your decision will not affect the quality of your care. You may also wish to talk to your partner.

We recommend that you have the test for the benefit of yourself and your baby.

We offer **everyone** information about the test because if the test shows that you are infected you can:

- * have treatment for your HIV
- * greatly reduce the risk of your baby being infected

And we can give treatment to babies who do become infected

If you have any other questions talk to your doctor or midwife, or you can get more information about HIV and the HIV test from:

National AIDS helpline
0800 567 123 (Free call)

Terrence Higgins Trust
0171 242 1010 (12-10pm every day)

Positively Women
0171 713 0222
(Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri 10am-4pm. Tues 10am-2pm)

Black Liners helpline
0171 738 5274
(Open Monday to Friday 10am-6.30pm)

Any Genito Urinary Medicine (STD) clinic
(Listed in the phone book under local hospitals)

Almost all of the babies born with HIV could have been protected if the mother had known she was infected