

**NOTICE OF HIV ANTIBODY TEST INFORMATION AND  
AUTHORIZATION FOR HIV ANTIBODY TEST**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Public Health Service  
Indian Health Service

**The HIV Antibody Test and AIDS:**

It has been recommended that you have a blood test for antibody to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, usually called AIDS. AIDS is a very serious disease in which the body's immune system is damaged, resulting in a variety of infections and cancers.

This blood test is to detect antibody to the virus. A positive test means that the body has been infected with HIV and the immune system has produced antibodies to fight the virus. Although the test does not detect the virus itself, a positive antibody test means that the virus is present and could be transmitted to other people. *A POSITIVE TEST DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU HAVE AIDS.*

Current medical knowledge does not tell us whether a person with a positive antibody test will definitely develop AIDS or related illnesses. HIV infection is a chronic and progressive infectious disease and it may take as long as ten or more years before symptoms develop after initial exposure to HIV. Therefore the long term prognosis for the individual with HIV infection is unknown.

**Who Is At Risk For HIV Infection & AIDS?**

HIV is spread by exposure to body fluids particularly blood, semen and vaginal fluid from infected persons. Exposure to blood through use of dirty needles in injection drug use (sharing needles) and exposure to sexual fluids through unprotected sexual acts (anal, oral or vaginal intercourse without a condom) are the main ways that people get infected with the virus.

People at increased risk include:

1. intravenous drug users,
2. men who have sex with men,
3. people receiving blood transfusions between 1978 and 1985,
4. hemophiliacs receiving plasma factor treatments prior to 1985,
5. people with a history of sexually transmitted diseases,
6. people that have sexual contacts with multiple partners,
7. the sexual partners of people with these risk factors,
8. children born to mothers infected with HIV, and
9. those that have unprotected sex.

Risks can be eliminated or greatly lowered by avoiding sex, avoiding injection drug use, having a mutually monogamous sexual relationship with an uninfected partner, practicing safer sex and not sharing needles.

Health care workers having direct contact with blood and body fluids are at risk if there is a significant exposure to HIV infected blood or body fluid. A significant exposure would be a contaminated needle stick or exposure of mucous membranes or broken skin to infected blood. This risk can be reduced by practicing universal precautions.

**What The Test Results Mean:**

1. If your test result is *positive*, this means you are infected with HIV and that you could transmit the virus to sex partners, needle sharing partners or from a mother to an unborn child. *A positive test does not mean that you have AIDS.* If your test is positive, it is important to . . .
  - a. Notify all sex partners or needle sharing partners of exposure to HIV. If you choose, you can have health care workers notify your contacts without using your name.
  - b. Follow-up with counseling and education of safer practices to avoid passing the infection on to others.
  - c. Follow-up with health care with your doctor and preventive health counseling.
2. If your test is *negative*, this means the test did not detect antibodies to HIV and most likely, you are not infected with the virus. The test however, will not detect infection that was contacted 3 to 6 months before being tested because it takes a while before the body develops antibodies.

If your test is negative, it is important to . . .

- a. Avoid future risk of exposure to the virus by safer behaviors, safer sex.
- b. Get retested if you have engaged in high risk activities in the past six months; get retested at least 3 months after your last exposure.

*(Continued on reverse side)*

- Occasionally, the HIV test is *indeterminate* which means the test result is uncertain and the laboratory can not tell definitely if the result is positive or negative.

If the test is indeterminate, you should . . .

- Have another blood specimen tested.
- Avoid unsafe activities in the future.
- Follow-up with counseling as recommended by your physician.

### Potential Advantage Of The HIV Antibody Test:

- If your test is positive, you will have knowledge of an important medical condition and the opportunity to take advantage of medical treatments and interventions that are becoming more and more effective in controlling the progression of HIV infection to AIDS conditions. Treatments and therapies may be much more successful if initiated before symptoms appear. You will also be in the position to take advantage of new therapies and experimental drugs as they become available.
- If you are positive, you can inform contacts of their possible exposure to enable them to make appropriate choices.
- If positive, you can take measures to prevent spreading of the infection, protect your loved ones and make informed decisions on family planning if you are a potential parent.
- If your are at risk for infection and are experiencing anxiety and fear about the possibility, with appropriate counseling and education testing, can be a way to confront your fears and deal with the problem realistically and constructively.
- If your test is negative six months after the last possible exposure, you will know that you do not have HIV infection and can take measures to prevent becoming infected in the future.

### Potential Disadvantages Of The Test:

- If you find your test is positive, the information can be emotionally devastating, leading to depression and other disorders. Thorough counseling and education is recommended for this reason to help you prepare to deal with the results if your test is positive.
- The HIV positive individual may be subjected to rejection, stigma and discrimination in areas such as employment and insurance if test results become widely known, This is why it is recommended you tell only your doctor, dentist, and your sexual or needle sharing partners if your results are positive. There are Federal laws against discrimination against HIV positive persons as for any medical handicap. There is increasing public acceptance and compassion for people with HIV infection as a result of public education campaigns. The Indian Health Service provides strict confidentiality for HIV testing and anonymous testing may be available at public health clinics at other locations.

### Confidentiality:

HIV antibody test results are considered confidential and will **not** be released to another person, physician, health care institution, insurance company or employer without your written permission. Test results may be used without your name to compile statistics. Test results will be revealed only to health care workers who need to know for providing treatment and to the State Health Department(s) as required by law. Test results will be place in your medical chart whether results are positive or negative.

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### CONSENT

I have read and understand the information presented above. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and these questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I give permission to the Indian Health Service staff to obtain a sample of my blood for the purpose of HIV antibody testing.

PATIENT'S SIGNATURE	DATE
COUNSELOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE

PATIENT IDENTIFICATION - USE EMPOSSER For typed or written entries, give:  
NAME - Last, first, middle, hospital number, and name of facility