

HIV pre-test discussion and post-test counselling guide for GPs



In 2005, 37% of WA residents who were diagnosed with HIV acquired their infection while travelling overseas, mainly in Africa and SE Asia. Most of these were heterosexual and several acquired their infection from their regular overseas partner.

Consider offering an HIV test to any patient who has put themselves at risk including those who have returned from a high HIV prevalence country.

Risk factors include:

- unprotected sexual contact
- unprotected sexual contact with someone who has migrated from, or recently travelled to, a high prevalence country
- high-risk homosexual contact
- presence of a sexually transmitted infection
- exposure to HIV through shared injecting equipment or through the use of unsterile tattooing or body piercing equipment
- potential exposure to unscreened blood or blood products through medical procedures.

Checklist for pre-test discussion and informed consent

- Inform your patient about **confidentiality** and your **legal responsibilities**. **Patient consent is always required.**
- Discuss possible **transmission routes** of HIV, what HIV is and treatment options.
- Explain that there is a **3 month window period**, what an antibody test is and what the test involves.
- Ensure your patient is aware of the possibility of a **positive result**.
- Explain that positive results are reported to the Department of Health.
- Explain that for positive results there is a requirement for contact tracing
- Be aware of **cultural understandings** of sickness and wellbeing and language barriers.
- Check that the patient knows they have to **return to collect the test results in person** and organise a follow-up appointment.

Checklist for post-test counselling

- Ensure the **name, result, date of birth** and **postcode** are correct before seeing your patient.
- Give the **results in person** and without delay.
- **Follow up** patients if they don't attend their appointment.

If the results are negative

- Check your patient understands how to **protect themselves** from HIV (e.g. safe sex, safe injecting practices).
- Review the **window period** and the need to retest.

If the results are positive

- Provide **support** and **written information** about living with HIV and possible treatments. Provide advice and referrals on where the patient can get **support**.
- Discuss **contact tracing/partner notification** with your patient.
- Discuss the patient's **legal obligations** and their rights and responsibilities around **disclosure**.
- Discuss **harm reduction strategies** such as safe sex and safe injecting practices.
- Offer **appointments** for GP and specialist follow-up.

GP Information

WA Department of Health
www.health.wa.gov.au

WA Sexual Health Services
http://www.health.wa.gov.au/services/category.cfm?Topic_ID=8

WA DOH Publications Ordering Site
<http://www.population.health.wa.gov.au/ordering/>

Guidelines for Managing STIs (under G)
<http://www.population.health.wa.gov.au/directory/index.cfm?char=G>

HIV information in other languages
<http://www.multiculturalhivhepc.net>

Translating and Interpreting Service
www.immi.gov.au/tis/doctor.htm
1300 131 450

Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM)
www.ashm.org.au
02 8204 0700

Patient Information

WA AIDS Council
www.waids.com
08 9482 0000

AIDSLine
08 9482 0044

Mens Line
08 9322 8401 or 1800 671 130
(toll free for country callers)

The Living Centre - Provides services for people living with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS
08 9470 4931

National Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS
www.napwa.org.au
1800 259 666 or 02 9557 8825

Gay and Lesbian Community Services of WA
08 9420 7201 or 1800 184 527
(toll free for country callers)

Royal Perth Hospital Sexual Health Clinic
08 9224 2178

Fremantle Hospital Infectious Diseases (B2 Clinic)
08 9431 2149

FPWA Sexual Health Services
08 9227 6177
08 9227 6178 or 1800 198 205
(toll free for country callers)