

Information on Antenatal Testing For HIV

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). The chance of this happening to people living in the Merseyside area is low. However, the Department of Health advise all pregnant women to be screened for HIV as part of their routine antenatal care.

This test will be offered and performed when women attend for their booking visit and will be performed along with other blood tests. The sample of blood required for Rubella testing can also be used for HIV testing, therefore a further sample is not required. However you may need more time to make a decision, therefore testing can be done at any time during the pregnancy.

Most mothers who have HIV feel well; a blood test is a way of identifying those who have the virus.

An HIV positive mother can pass the virus to her baby before or during childbirth or by Breast-feeding

Sadly, 20% of babies who are infected with HIV and **do not** have the treatment will develop AIDS or die within the first year of life.

Treatment can reduce the chance of babies born to mothers with HIV becoming infected from 25% to 5%

Are there any signs and symptoms of HIV ?

- ◆ Most people with HIV do not have any signs of illness
- ◆ Some people may feel tired and complain of a high temperature, sore throat, swollen glands or painful muscles and joints.

How can HIV be passed on / caught?

- ◆ Contact with HIV by contaminated blood or body fluids
- ◆ Unprotected sex with an infected person.
- ◆ From infected needles, syringes or drug users sharing equipment.
- ◆ Tattooing, body piercing or acupuncture with contaminated equipment.
- ◆ Mother to baby during childbirth and breast feeding

How can the risk of passing HIV from mother to baby be reduced?

- ◆ Specialist care during pregnancy and childbirth
- ◆ Mothers with HIV are given drugs to help reduce the risk of the virus being passed on from mother to baby
- ◆ Babies are delivered by Caesarean section.
- ◆ Babies are treated from birth

Breast-feeding

There is clear evidence that breast-feeding should be avoided when the mother has screened positive for HIV, individual advice and support will be available.

Insurance /mortgage

There are implications for life insurance and mortgage, should the HIV screen prove positive. However, this is balanced by the benefits of specialist care for mother and baby

When will the results be available and how will you be contacted?

- ◆ The results will be available within 7 – 10 working days
- ◆ Women whose results are **Positive** will be contacted by letter or telephone as soon as the result is available, a further sample of blood will be required .You will be referred for specialist advice and treatment.
Please let the midwife know at booking how you wish to be informed, should your result be positive
- ◆ Women whose results are **Negative** will be informed at their 20 week visit. In other words if you don't hear from us, you can assume that you are HIV negative.

Key points

- ◆ At booking visit the midwife will discuss HIV testing and answer any questions you may have.
- ◆ You can be tested at any time during pregnancy.
- ◆ Further blood sample may be required.
- ◆ All HIV negative women will be informed at 20-week visit.
- ◆ Appointment with specialist team from Royal Liverpool hospital within 3 weeks of testing, for women who screen positive to HIV.

This information is not intended to replace discussion with either medical or midwifery staff. If you have any questions regarding the contents of this leaflet please discuss this with a midwife or obstetrician.

For any further information please contact **Antenatal Clinic Manager** on **0151 708 9988** Ask switchboard to bleep 208

For further information there is a list of useful web sites which can be found on the Liverpool Women's Hospital web site.

Go to

www.lwh.org.uk

Click on



Support & Information



Useful organisations

If you require any advice about the information on the web sites please speak to a midwife or doctor at the hospital or a community midwife at the GP surgery

This leaflet may be available in different formats on request

Ref: Mat 13/03

Review date July 2005