



## Pre-test HIV Counseling Guidelines for Pregnant Women

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- A pregnant individual must be counseled by a health care provider about HIV testing and the meaning of an HIV positive test result in order to give verbal voluntary informed consent.
- Voluntary informed consent must be obtained from a pregnant individual to be tested for HIV before:
  - A specimen is obtained for the purpose of HIV testing; or
  - An HIV test is performed on a specimen obtained for another purpose.
- Include information that the pregnant individual can refuse the HIV test without penalty, and that a positive test result cannot be the basis for denying prenatal care.
  - Document verbal voluntary informed consent in the medical record.
  - If the patient declines the HIV test, this **must** be documented in the medical record as well.
- Pre-test counseling can be provided in writing, verbally, by video, or in any combination based on the needs and testing history of the pregnant individual.
- Pre-test counseling should include:
  - Information that the pregnant individual will be tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.
  - An explanation that the results of this test are confidential.
  - A description of how HIV is transmitted, including the following:
    - Unprotected sexual contact with an infected partner, if body fluids are exchanged (e.g., vaginal, oral or anal sex);
    - Blood to blood contact with infected blood (e.g., sharing needles or other injection drug equipment, transplant recipients, blood transfusions, etc.); and
    - From an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, delivery or breastfeeding.
  - Information that the pregnant individual can engage in behavior that reduces her likelihood of becoming infected.
  - An explanation of the risk of fetal transmission and the effect of pharmaceuticals during pregnancy, including medications known to reduce the risk of transmission of HIV to the fetus.
  - A brief explanation of the potential results for the test being provided, including the following:
    - Possible Results for Conventional Blood Drawn Tests:
      - A negative test result means that HIV infection has not been found at the time of the test.
      - A positive HIV test result means that a person is infected with HIV, but DOES NOT mean a diagnosis of AIDS. Other tests will be needed to make that determination.
      - An indeterminate test result means that the test is inconclusive and further testing will need to be conducted.
    - Possible Results for Rapid Tests:
      - A negative test result means that HIV infection has not been found at the time of the test.
      - A preliminary positive result means that in all probability the individual is infected with HIV. Further tests will be needed to confirm this test result.
      - An invalid test result means that the test device has failed and another test should be conducted.
  - A description of what will happen if the test result is positive, including the following information:
    - Services or referrals for appropriate treatment and support will be provided, including services for pregnant women to reduce the risk of transmission to the fetus or newborn;
    - The individual will be offered assistance in notifying and referring her partner(s) for services.