



Providing HIV Test Results and Referrals

The purpose of the post-test counseling session is to provide the pregnant individual with test results and, when appropriate, connect the individual to treatment and supportive services.

Maryland state law specifies:

- The health care provider or health care facility **must** notify a pregnant individual of the test result regardless of the result.
- When a pregnant individual receives a positive test result, a physician or physician's designee **must** refer the individual to appropriate HIV-specific health care and HIV case management services.
- A health care provider should counsel a pregnant individual to inform her partner(s) at risk for contracting HIV of her positive HIV status, and offer to assist the pregnant individual in notifying her partner(s) or refer the individual(s) to the local health officer for assistance.

The health care provider should:

- Ensure that their facility has updated referral resources from the Local Health Department, including counseling, treatment, and support services for HIV positive individuals.
- Ensure the post-test session is conducted in a manner that protects the individual's confidentiality, including the verification of the individual's identity, either by telephone (for negative test results ONLY) or in person.
- Tell the individual the result and meaning of her HIV test and answer any questions the individual may have about the testing event.
- For those who receive a positive HIV test result, healthcare providers should refer the individual to:
 - A specialized HIV/infectious disease practitioner,
 - HIV case management,
 - Partner services, and
 - Other supportive services as appropriate (i.e., substance abuse treatment, mental health services, STD screening, etc.).
- Provide medical information that may be useful to a pregnant individual who is HIV positive including:
 - That the individual should have a medical evaluation completed by a physician or physician's designee who specializes in the treatment of HIV positive pregnant individuals.

The health care provider should also:

- Consult with an infectious disease specialist and/or obstetrician experienced in prenatal HIV management.
- Discuss actions recommended to prevent transmission to the fetus, including antiretroviral medication and delivery methods, and the risks of breast-feeding once the infant is born.
- Discuss precautions that may be taken to prevent infection, re-infection or transmission to others, including the following:
 - Abstinence or safe sex techniques and the use of condoms for all sexual encounters;
 - Never share needles or other injection equipment;
 - Never donate blood, plasma, tissue, organs or sperm; and
 - Never share items that could become contaminated with blood.

For more information, visit: http://dhmh.state.md.us/AIDS/HIV_index.html
or <http://www.healthymaryland.org/hiv-and-aids.php>.