

HIV TESTING IS NOW RECOMMENDED AS A ROUTINE TEST FOR ALL PREGNANT WOMEN

As of August 1, 1999, hospital maternity staff are required to approach all women in labor who do not have an HIV test result from prenatal care and offer them expedited HIV testing with preliminary results available as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours. **For those women without prenatal HIV test results who decline HIV testing during delivery, hospitals are required to conduct expedited HIV testing of all newborns** with preliminary results available in the same time frame. This means that starting August 1st, patients will be learning their HIV status during or immediately after delivery if they have not been tested during prenatal care.

1. **HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.** HIV is passed from one person to another during unprotected sex (vaginal, anal or oral sex without a condom) with someone who has HIV. HIV is also passed by shooting drugs using the works of a person who has HIV. **A woman with HIV can pass the virus to her baby during pregnancy or birth or through breastfeeding.**
2. **If a woman is pregnant and has HIV, there are treatments that may help her keep up her health and reduce the chances of passing HIV to her baby.** If a pregnant woman with HIV does not get any treatment, the chance of her passing HIV to her baby is about one in four. If she gets treatment, the chance of her passing HIV to her baby is about one in twelve.
3. **By law, all babies in New York State are tested for HIV soon after they are born.** But it is much better for a woman to know her HIV status as early in pregnancy as possible so she can make important decisions about health care and breastfeeding.

THE HIV TEST IS SAFE AND CAN BE DONE ALONG WITH OTHER PRENATAL BLOOD TESTS

4. **Along with being tested, women and their partners can learn about ways to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).**
5. **If a woman's test shows she has HIV, her partner and children should be tested for HIV.** Health care and other needed services are available for the whole family if any member has HIV.
6. **HIV testing is confidential.** A doctor can share HIV test results with others who provide health care for a woman and her baby. The names of people who have HIV and other STDs, like syphilis and gonorrhea, will be confidentially sent to the State Health Department. This helps the State Health Department plan services for people living with HIV and assist in informing partners.
7. **Help is available for women with HIV to let sex or needle-sharing partners learn that they should get tested for HIV.** Counselors from Health Department programs called PNAP and CNAP can help notify partners without ever telling them the woman's name.
8. **Many resources are available in New York to help women with HIV meet their medical, social and legal needs.**

For more information, go to <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/aids/newborn/index.htm>