

HIV Rapid Testing in the Labor & Delivery Setting

Provider Guide to Discussion

How to Use This Guide

- ◆ This Guide was written to help you discuss HIV rapid testing for women in labor.
- ◆ Provide the woman with information on HIV testing using the key points listed below.
- ◆ Language in this Guide may need to be adapted to your practice setting.

Who Needs HIV Rapid Testing in Labor & Delivery?

Pregnant women in inpatient antenatal or labor and delivery settings who have

- ◆ declined HIV testing in prenatal care
- ◆ no documentation of HIV testing/results on prenatal record
- ◆ no history of prenatal care or
- ◆ no record/results of repeat HIV testing in the 3rd trimester.

Setting the Stage

- ◆ Tell the woman that you are going to talk to her about HIV testing, and ask if she wants her partner or family member to be present.
- ◆ It is important to be matter of fact about HIV testing, but also show empathy.
- ◆ Tell the woman she should signal you when a contraction is happening, so you can pause until it is over.
- ◆ Pause to verify understanding. Adjust your terminology as needed.

Suggestions for Starting the Conversation

- ◆ I'd like to talk with you about having an HIV test.
- ◆ We have no record that you had an HIV test this pregnancy or in the last three months.
- ◆ Do you already know if you have HIV infection?

Key Points that Need to be Included in the Conversation

- Experts recommend that all women have an HIV test early in pregnancy and again in the last three months before the baby is born.
- If you are positive, there are medicines you can take to lower the risk of the baby getting HIV.
- If you have not been tested twice in pregnancy, a rapid HIV test is recommended before the baby is born.
- The rapid HIV test is voluntary and you can decline to have it.
- In our hospital, we follow these recommendations because so much can be done to protect the baby from HIV infection.
- We always do a second test to confirm a rapid test that is positive.
- HIV test results are confidential. The law protects people with HIV from discrimination.

Additional Messages to Support the Conversation

Why having a rapid HIV test is important for you and your baby

- ◆ HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. HIV can be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy, at delivery, and through breastfeeding.
- ◆ A woman could be at risk for HIV and not know it.
- ◆ A rapid HIV test can give us results quickly. It is a blood test.
- ◆ If you have HIV infection, rapid testing will allow you to get medicine during labor and delivery to reduce the risk of passing HIV to your baby.

Why having a rapid HIV test is important for you and your baby *continued*

- ◆ If you have HIV infection, your baby will receive medicine after birth.
- ◆ Without treatment, the chance the baby will be infected is about 25%, or 1 in 4.
- ◆ We know if women are given medicine during labor and delivery and their babies get the medicine right after birth, we can reduce the risk of HIV transmission to about 10%, or about 1 in 10 babies.

How is HIV spread?

- ◆ HIV is a serious illness that can affect a woman's health and her baby's health.
- ◆ One of the ways HIV is spread is by unprotected sexual intercourse. Therefore, **all** pregnant women may be at risk for HIV infection.
- ◆ HIV can be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy, at delivery, and by breastfeeding.

What happens when the rapid test result comes back?

- ◆ You will receive a **preliminary** result about an hour after your blood is drawn.
- ◆ If the rapid HIV test is **negative**, no further testing is needed at this time.
- ◆ It most likely means that you do not have HIV. However, the test may **not** show recent infection.
- ◆ If the rapid test is negative it is OK to breastfeed your baby.

If the rapid HIV test is positive

- ◆ You **may** have HIV infection and your baby **may** have been exposed to HIV.
- ◆ We recommend that you start treatment with anti-HIV medicines (called "antiretroviral" medicines) to help prevent transmission of HIV to your baby, while we wait for results from a 2nd test used to confirm the first result.

- ◆ We need your permission to start medicine if the preliminary test is positive.
- ◆ Experts recommend several medicines to reduce the chance your baby will get HIV. One is called AZT (also known as zidovudine [ZDV] or Retrovir®) and we give it in your IV fluids into your vein.
- ◆ Your doctor will discuss with you which medicines will be best for you and your baby.
- ◆ After your baby is born, he or she will start taking AZT syrup.
- ◆ These medicines have been studied for the past 10 years in pregnant women and newborns and there have been no serious side effects.
- ◆ You should wait until we have the results of the confirmatory test before you start breastfeeding.

If the confirmatory test is negative

- ◆ Your baby will immediately be taken off any medicine that was started.

If the test is confirmed as positive

- ◆ The baby's medicine that was started to help prevent HIV transmission will be continued.
- ◆ Your doctor or nurse will talk with you about the medicine.

Your baby will need more testing for HIV infection.

- ◆ You will be referred to a physician for your ongoing medical care.
- ◆ You will also be referred to a health care provider who will take care of your baby's medical needs.

