



NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES (INC)

NZCOM CONSENSUS STATEMENT

Sexually Transmitted Infections Screening

This Consensus Statement was ratified at NZCOM Annual General Meeting on 11th September 2008

The New Zealand College of Midwives (Inc) promotes discussion between midwives and women on the risks of Sexually Transmitted Infections during pregnancy and the offer of screening for Sexually Transmitted Infections. The pregnant woman determines her risk factors following this discussion and then makes the decision whether to undertake screening based on full and culturally appropriate information.

Rationale:

- It is within a midwife's scope of practice to provide women with the information to make an informed decision about screening for sexually transmitted infections (STI).
- Midwives have a responsibility to inform all their clients about:
 - known risk factors for transmission of the various Sexually Transmitted Infections
 - the 'silent' nature of some STIs e.g. Chlamydia which have no symptoms
 - that during pregnancy there are a variety of tests available to screen for sexually transmitted infections
 - the health implications associated with the various sexually transmitted infections during pregnancy for both the woman and her baby.
- Evidence supports antenatal treatment for women that have a Sexually Transmitted Infection as effective in improving both maternal health and perinatal health outcomes.
- Specific consent from women for screening for all Sexually Transmitted Infection must always be obtained and the woman's decision documented in the maternity clinical records. This includes the screening for syphilis which is part of the first antenatal screening bloods.
- Referral can be made to other agencies where women can obtain further information about Sexually Transmitted Infection screening and treatment if they require it.

Guidelines:

Midwives are responsible for ensuring that information given to women is accurate and up to date and that they themselves have the skills and education to provide evidence informed pre- and post-test advice. It is the responsibility of the midwife to provide a safe environment in which the woman may discuss information about her health status and risk status so that she can make an informed decision about screening for Sexually Transmitted Infections. It is the midwife's responsibility to ensure the woman receives the results of any test undertaken if the woman has chosen to be screened and to refer and involve other agencies to support the woman particularly if partner screening is required.

Advice given by midwives should be holistic and include information on:

- risk behaviour for Sexually Transmitted Infections
- how screening is done
- implications and treatment options for both the woman and her baby if screening is positive
- confidentiality, record keeping
- other services the woman can be referred to if she wishes to discuss further options about Sexually Transmitted Infection screening.

If a woman has chosen to be screened for Sexually Transmitted Infections the midwife will:

- endeavour to give the results face to face
- provide post-test advice for all women, regardless of the result or if more appropriate refer the woman to specialist agencies for advice, tests and treatment
- be aware of the services available to refer women to if necessary
- advise the woman on the importance of the need for her sexual contacts to seek screening and medical advice

References:

Title: Draft Chlamydia Management Guidelines
Author: Ministry of Health 2008
Source: www.moh.govt.nz

Title: Guidelines for the Management of Genital Herpes in New Zealand 8th Edition 2007
Author: Professional Advisory Board of the Viral Sexually Transmitted Infection Education Foundation
Source: www.herpes.org.nz

Title: Sexually transmitted diseases treatment guidelines
Author: Workowski, KA., Berman, SM.,
Source: Centers for disease Control and Prevention

Title: Prevention and Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases: An Update
Author: Van Vranken, M
Source: American Family Physicians website www.aafp.org

The purpose of New Zealand College of Midwives Consensus Statements is to provide women, midwives and the maternity services with the profession's position on any given situation. The guidelines are designed to educate and support best practice.
All position statements are regularly reviewed and updated in line with evidence-based practice.