



NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES (INC)

Consensus Statement *HIV Screening*

This Consensus Statement was ratified at the Annual General Meeting, October 17, 2006

Original Statement ratified 21 November 1996, Subsequent statement July 2002

References Updated July 2009

The New Zealand College of Midwives (Inc) supports midwives discussing with all women HIV screening in pregnancy. The pregnant woman determines her risk factors following this discussion and then makes the decision whether to undertake HIV screening based on full and culturally appropriate information.

Rationale:

- NZCOM believes that it is within a midwife's scope of practice to provide women with the information to make an informed decision about HIV screening.
- Midwives have a responsibility to inform all their clients about HIV risk factors for transmission, that a test is available, the implications of being HIV positive and pregnant and agencies where women can obtain further information about HIV screening if they require it.
- The rate of HIV is increasing in both heterosexual males and females
- Evidence supports antenatal treatment and appropriate intervention for HIV positive women as effective in reducing the rate of perinatal transmission to babies.
- Specific consent for HIV screening must always be obtained and woman's decision documented in the midwifery records.

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 HIV screening. It is the midwife's responsibility to ensure the woman receives the results of the test if the woman has chosen to be screened and to involve other agencies to support the woman if the result is indeterminate or positive.

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

- risk behaviour for HIV infection
- how screening is done
- window period – woman/partner may have no symptoms. Antibodies may still be at the point where they can not be detected
- implications and treatment options for both the woman and her baby if screening is positive including interventions to reduce transmission rates
- confidentiality, record keeping
- other services the woman can be referred to if she wishes to discuss options about HIV screening further

If a woman has chosen to be screened for HIV the midwife will:

- endeavour to give the results face to face
- provide post-test advice for all women, regardless of the result
- be aware of the services available to refer women to if necessary

References:

- Title: HIV Screening in Pregnancy. A report to the New Zealand Minister of Health
Authors: National Health Committee
Source: National Health Committee, 2004.
- Title: HIV Screening in Pregnancy
Author: Federation of Women's Health Councils, 2005.
Source: NZCOM National office
- Title: Ministry of Health announces move to routinely offering antenatal HIV screening
Author: Press release, Ministry of Health, June 2005.
Source: New Zealand Ministry of Health
- Title: Antenatal HIV Screening
Author: National Screening Unit.
Source: New Zealand Ministry of Health
<http://www.nsu.govt.nz/Current-NSU-Programmes/567.asp>
- Title: Exclusive breastfeeding and HIV infection
Author: International Confederation of Midwives, 2008
Source: www.internationalmidwives.org
- Title: Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immuno- Deficiency Syndrome (HIV and AIDS)
Author: International Confederation of Midwives, 2008
Source: www.internationalmidwives.org
- Title: Global Coalition on Women and AIDS
Author: UNAIDS/ UNFPA/ UNIFEM- 2004
Source: <http://www.unaids.org/en/Partnerships/Global+Coalition+on+Women+and+AIDS>
- Title: HIV and Infant Feeding
Author: World Health Organisation, 2003
Source: http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/NUTRITION/HIV_infant.htm
- Title: Human Immunodeficiency Virus – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) – Position Statement
Source: International Confederation of Midwives, 2005
- Title: Refugee Health Care – A Handbook for Health Professionals
Author: Ministry of Health, November 2001
Source: Ministry of Health

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.