

Consensus Statement: **HIV Screening in Pregnancy**

The New Zealand College of Midwives supports discussion between midwives and women on HIV screening in pregnancy. The pregnant woman determines her risk factors following this discussion and decides whether to undertake HIV screening based on full and culturally appropriate information.

Rationale:

- Early diagnosis and treatment of HIV gives women the best opportunity to stay healthy and well longer³.
- Evidence supports antenatal treatment and appropriate intervention for HIV positive women as effective in significantly reducing the rate of perinatal transmission to babies^{3, 4, 5, 10, 13}.
- The midwife-woman partnership can facilitate a safe environment in which the woman can discuss information about her health status so that she can make an informed decision about screening for HIV⁸.
- Midwives have a responsibility to inform all their clients about the risk factors for HIV transmission, that a test is available; the implications of being HIV positive and pregnant and of agencies where women can obtain further information about HIV screening if they require it^{1, 8}.

Guidelines/Recommendations:

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 midwife's responsibility to ensure the woman receives the results of any test the midwife requests and to involve other agencies to support the woman if the result is indeterminate or positive^{1, 3, 8}.

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

- Risk behavior for HIV infection
- How screening is undertaken
- Other services the woman can be referred to if she wishes to discuss options about HIV screening further
- Window period – with newer testing methods, this is approximately two weeks
- Implications and treatment options for both the woman and her baby if screening is positive including interventions to reduce transmission rates³.

Specific consent or refusal for HIV screening must always be obtained and the woman's decision documented in the midwifery records^{3, 7}.

Confidentiality, record keeping - it is important to ensure women are aware their data is used for monitoring and evaluation by the MOH and that their personal details are carefully protected³.

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

- endeavor to give the results face to face^{3, 7, 11}.
- provide post-test advice for all women, regardless of the result^{3, 7, 11}.
- be aware of the services available to refer women to if necessary^{3, 7}.

References:

- 1 ICM (2014). Position Statement Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV and AIDS). International Confederation of Midwives.
- 2 Ministry of Health. (2012). Refugee Health Care: A Handbook for Health Professionals. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
- 3 Ministry of Health. (2015). Guidelines for Health Practitioners Offering Antenatal HIV Screening in New Zealand. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
- 4 Ministry of Health. (2014). Antenatal HIV Screening Programme: Monitoring Report July to December. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
- 5 Ministry of Health. (2016). Breastfeeding with HIV Infection. <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/hiv-and-aids/breastfeeding-women-hiv-infection>
- 6 Ministry of Health. Your Health Guides – HIV/AIDS <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/hiv-aids>
- 7 Ministry of Health: Health Education Resource pre and posttest counselling <https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/voluntary-counselling-and-testing-diagnosis-hiv-infection>
- 8 New Zealand College of Midwives. (2015). Midwives Handbook for Practice. 5th ed. Christchurch: New Zealand College of Midwives.
- 9 Panel on Antiretroviral Guidelines for Adults and Adolescents. Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in Adults and Adolescents Living with HIV. Department of Health and Human Services.(update 2018) Available at <https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/>
- 10 Panel on Treatment of HIV infected Pregnant Women and Prevention of Perinatal Transmission. Recommendations for use of antiretroviral Drugs in Pregnant HIV-1-Infected Women for Maternal Health and Interventions to Reduce perinatal HIV Transmission in the United States. Available at <http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/contentfiles/lvguidelines/PerinatalGL.pdf>
- 11 Rothpletz-Puglia, P., Storm, D., Burr, C., & Samuels, D. (2012). Routine Prenatal HIV Testing: Women's Concerns and Their Strategies for Addressing Concerns. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 16(2), 464–469. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-011-0754-4>
- 12 World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund. (2016). Guideline: updates on HIV and infant feeding: the duration of breastfeeding, and support from health services to improve feeding practices among mothers living with HIV. Geneva: World Health Organization
- 13 WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank (2015). Pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum and newborn care: a guide for essential practice. 3rd ed. Geneva: World Health Organization http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/imca-essential-practice-guide/en,

Resources:

National Screening Unit: About Screening: Discussion aid for Health Practitioners https://www.nsu.govt.nz/system/files/resources/about_screening_discussion_aid_for_health_practitioners.pdf

National Screening Unit: Antenatal HIV screening resources. <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/health-professionals/hiv-testing-pregnancy/antenatal-hiv-screening-resources>

New Zealand Aids Foundation Support Services <https://www.nzaf.org.nz/living-with-hiv/support-and-services-1/>

Ratification:

*Original Statement ratified at NZ College of Midwives AGM 21/11/1996
Reviewed and References updated 2002, 2006, 2009, 2018*

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.