

## Patient information

### Having a HIV Test in the Emergency Department

#### Emergency Care – Royal Liverpool Hospital

This leaflet tells you about having a routine HIV test in the Royal Liverpool Hospital Emergency Department.

#### **What is HIV?**

HIV is the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and may cause AIDS if left untreated. It is a virus which can be passed on during sex. Using condoms during sex greatly reduces the chances of HIV being passed on, but does not remove the risk completely.

HIV can also be passed on from a mother to her unborn baby and by sharing needles. It affects the immune system which fights infections.

People can have HIV for many years without feeling unwell. When the infection has been there for some time, it can make you ill and may even be life-threatening.

Finding HIV infection early and starting HIV treatment helps people stay well and out of hospital. HIV is now a long-term manageable condition with safe and effective treatment.

#### **Why am I being tested for HIV?**

Your doctor has recommended a routine HIV blood test for you today. This is because there are some common health problems which occur more frequently in people with untreated HIV infection. It is important to test for an underlying cause of your problem by doing an HIV test.

You may also be offered a routine test if you have had a particular risk, for example, sex between men or sex in a country where HIV is more common. Refusing to have an HIV test will not affect your care in the department.

#### **Is the result kept confidential?**

Yes. We will only share the result with hospital staff who need to be involved in your care.

#### **How long does it take to get the result?**

The results will be ready in less than two weeks.

#### **Will I get my results if the test is negative?**

No, we will not contact you if the result is negative for HIV infection. So, "no news is good news." If you do not hear from us within 14 days you can assume the result is negative.

We ask you not to call the hospital for results. This is because, due to confidentiality, we cannot give these over the phone.

### **What will happen if my test is positive or abnormal?**

If the HIV test is positive (or reactive), you will be asked to come to the hospital to repeat the test. This is to confirm the result.

You will be contacted by a member of staff from a different department. They have lots of experience supporting people who have had a positive HIV test.

Testing HIV positive can be a shock, but it is better to know about it so you can take control of your health.

### **What if my contact details change?**

Your doctor or nurse will check that we have the correct contact details for you. If your contact details change within two weeks of having the blood test, please call the appointments line on **Tel: 0151 706 5555 Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 5555** and inform them that you need to change the contact details on record.

We will need to contact your doctor if we cannot contact you by phone or by letter. We will not tell them the result of the HIV test but will ask them to help us contact you.

### **What do I do if I think I have been at risk recently?**

Most HIV infections will show up on a blood test taken four weeks after being infected. However, it is recommended to have a repeat blood test taken eight weeks after a risk to be absolutely sure.

### **Does having an HIV test affect getting life insurance or a mortgage?**

No, having a negative HIV test has no effect on getting life insurance or a mortgage.

Even if the result is positive, you should not have difficulty getting health insurance, loans or a mortgage. Insurance companies understand that HIV is now a long-term health condition and that people do very well on treatment and often have a normal life expectancy.

### **Arranging an HIV test somewhere else**

You may not wish to have a test today, but decide you want one later. You can have an HIV test by at a sexual health clinic or by asking your family doctor (GP).

### **Sexual health clinics**

The blood test for HIV will not identify any other sexually transmitted infections. If you would like a full sexual health check there are several clinics in Liverpool. You can attend some of these without an appointment.

Visit **[www.sexualhealthliverpool.co.uk](http://www.sexualhealthliverpool.co.uk)** for details. If you do not have the internet, call the National Sexual Health advice line on **0300 123 7123**. They will help you find an appointment.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further information**

### **Sahir House HIV Helpline**

**Tel: 0151 237 3990**

**Textphone Number: 18001 0151 237 3990**

Sahir House is a centre offering information and support. The service is open to any individual or family living with or affected by HIV on Merseyside, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or sexuality.

### **National AIDS Map (NAM)**

**[www.aidsmap.com](http://www.aidsmap.com)**

### **Terence Higgins Trust**

**[www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)**

**Please keep this leaflet for your reference.**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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