

Key points: Advise and Refer for HIV testing

1. Establish trust with the patient :

- Introduce yourself
- Go through the history and presenting complaints
- Explain diagnosis of condition(s)

2. Ensure **privacy and confidentiality** in the consultation room: a one-to one medical consultation in an enclosed space is optimum.

3. Provide Key Information on HIV

HIV is a virus that destroys body's immune system. A person infected with HIV may not feel sick at first, but slowly the body's immune system is weakened. S/he becomes ill and is unable to fight infections. Once a person is infected with HIV, she/he can transmit the virus to others

HIV can be transmitted through:

- Exchange of HIV infected fluid during unprotected sexual intercourse (anal and vaginal)
- HIV-infected blood transfusion
- Injecting drug use
- Sharing instruments for tattoo or skin piercing
- From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, labour and delivery and breastfeeding

HIV cannot be transmitted through hugging, kissing, eating together or mosquito bites

A special blood test is done at ICTC to find out if the person is infected with HIV

4. Provide Information on HIV Testing

The HIV test will determine whether a person has been infected with the HIV virus. It is a simple blood test that will allow us to make a clearer diagnosis

Before and after the test, counseling will be provided to talk more in-depth about HIV/AIDS

If a person is tested positive, Counselor will provide information about services available to manage the disease. This may include antiretroviral drugs and other medicines to manage the disease. If the test is negative, Counselor will focus on counseling and information on how to remain negative.

5. Explain procedures to safeguard confidentiality

The results of the HIV test will only be known to the patient and the treating medical team. This means that the test results are confidential and it is against testing policy to share results with others without clients permission.

6. Confirm willingness to be referred to ICTC

The treating physician needs to confirm patients willingness to undergo HIV counseling & testing.

Remember: Patient has a right to refuse an HIV test. HIV testing is not mandatory.

7. If patients require additional information, discuss advantages and importance of knowing the HIV status:

- The test will allow health care providers to make a proper diagnosis and ensure effective follow-up & treatment
- If the test is negative, the counseling will focus on information on how to remain negative
- If a person is tested positive, counseling will focus on information to protect themselves from re-infection and their partner from infection
- PLHA will be provided with information regarding treatment and care for managing their disease, including
 - ✦ Cotrimoxazole prophylaxis
 - ✦ Free ART at government ART centers
 - ✦ Treatment for opportunistic infections
 - ✦ Regular follow-up and support
- Positive pregnant women are counseled to access interventions to prevent transmission from mother to infants, and to make decisions about present and future pregnancies
- Counselors are also to discuss the psychological and emotional implications of HIV infection and encourage to disclose the status of infection to those whom patients decide needs to know
- An early diagnosis helps PLHA to cope better with the disease and plan for the future.

If the patient is unsure about or uncomfortable with having an HIV test or declines the test, Treat existing condition and ask for a follow-up.

Healthcare Provider Tool: Assess, Suspect & Refer for HIV counseling and testing

Review any patient coming for a medical consultation for any of these: history, symptoms and signs for referral to ICTC

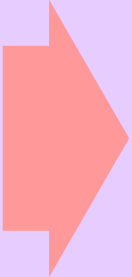
Ask/Assess

⇒ Presenting complaints:

- ◆ Prolonged fever for more than 1 month
- ◆ Unexplained fatigue
- ◆ Multiple swellings/lymph gland enlargement
- ◆ Chronic diarrhea more than 1 month
- ◆ Significant weight loss

⇒ History

- ◆ Unsafe sexual activity/multiple sexual partners or with sex worker
- ◆ Past/present STIs
- ◆ Sharing of needles and syringes (injecting drug use)
- ◆ High risk occupation (eg commercial sex work, truckers etc)
- ◆ If partner or child is known to be HIV positive or has HIV or HIV-related illness
- ◆ MSM (men having sex with men)
- ◆ Blood transfusions



Look during clinical examination

- ⇒ Oral thrush or oral hairy leukoplakia
- ⇒ Herpes zoster or scarring
- ⇒ Lymphadenopathy swellings in neck and armpit
- ⇒ Prurigo, skin rashes
- ⇒ Chronic herpes simplex (genital or oral)
- ⇒ Signs of injecting drug use: track marks, cellulitis, thrombophlebitis, scarring over veins, multiple abscesses
- ⇒ Sexually transmitted infections (STI) signs: discharge, ulcers etc
- ⇒ Gum/mouth ulcers



Actions

1. Treat conditions or refer for treatment
2. Refer to Counseling and Testing (ICTC)

**Routine referral to ICTC : patients who have Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), Injecting drug users (IDU), high risk occupation (sex worker), Men-who-have sex-with-Men (MSM), Antenatal pregnant women (ANC)
Have heightened suspicion for HIV in TB patients and refer if indicated by other risk factors**