

Source Patient Information: Testing for hepatitis B, hepatitis C & HIV

An incident has occurred in which another person has been exposed to your blood or body fluid. Because of the nature of the exposure, there is a need to carry out a blood test to check if you have certain viruses that can be transmitted if present in your blood. These viruses are hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Negative test results will reduce the other person's anxiety and eliminate the need for them to undergo unnecessary treatment.

Testing for the viruses

Blood tests will be done to determine whether you already have any of these viruses. The results of these tests are confidential and only used for the purposes of confirming your infection status at the time of the incident. The results will be sent confidentially to your own healthcare provider. The results of your blood tests will be disclosed by your provider to the clinician who is treating the person who was exposed to your blood or body fluid.

What do the blood tests involve?

Before the tests, you will be provided with information regarding the tests that will be conducted. The blood tests are similar to testing that you may have had before. It should only take a few minutes and you will be advised when to expect the results. You have the right to refuse to be tested. If you choose not to be tested, your care will not be affected.

What happens if the blood tests are negative?

This means that you tested negative for the viruses and no further testing will be required.

What happens if the blood test is positive?

If the blood test is positive for one of these viruses and this was previously unknown to you, you will be referred to a specialist for follow-up.

Are there any implications of a positive test?

- If the test is positive for any of these bloodborne viruses, you will be referred to a specialist for follow up assessment and management.
- You should inform your sexual or injection drug using partners, so they have the chance to be tested and get any treatment needed.
- If you want help with informing a partner, the NYS Department of Health Partner Services staff can talk with you about your options, and help you to set up a plan for those partners who need to be notified, offered testing and if necessary, treatment for their exposure. For information about partner services go to:
www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/std/partner_services/accessing_partner_services.htm
- You should not share shaving blades or razors, toothbrushes, and needles.
- You should get advice about pregnancy and breast feeding from your health care provider.
- Hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV are notifiable diseases and positive results will be reported confidentially to the NYS Department of Health