

Patient Information leaflet

Testing for HIV

At this practice we offer HIV testing to:

- ✓ Everyone wanting to register with us as part of standard medical care.
- ✓ Some people who are already registered and are having blood tests for other reasons.
- ✓ Sometimes your doctor may recommend an HIV test, for example if you are at increased risk of HIV or if you have a condition associated with HIV infection.

What is HIV infection?

HIV is a virus that can damage the body's defence system so that it cannot fight off certain infections.

HIV can be found in people who are fit and well, as symptoms can take years to develop.

AIDS is the condition that can occur if someone who is HIV positive goes on to develop certain other serious illnesses. AIDS can be prevented if HIV is diagnosed early enough.

Why do we offer HIV testing?

- ✓ In this area the number of people living with HIV is high enough for National organisations to recommend testing everyone registering with a medical practice

- ✓ Excellent medicines have now been developed for treating HIV. This treatment will help to keep you healthy and reduce the risk of you passing the virus on to another person.
- ✓ The earlier you find out about HIV infection, the better the chance of the treatment working.

Who is at risk of HIV?

Anyone who has been in a sexual relationship or has had a needle or blood exposure can have HIV. However, some groups of people are at higher risk. These include:

- ✓ Men who have sex with men
- ✓ People from countries such as Africa, South East Asia and parts of Eastern Europe where there are higher rates of HIV
- ✓ People who have injected drug
- ✓ People who have had a blood transfusion abroad
- ✓ Those with other health problems known to be more commonly seen in those with HIV

If you want more information about HIV, please ask us. If you decided that you do not want to test for HIV please tell the doctor or nurse looking after you.