



I'm pregnant

Should I have these tests?



Catriona Ooi, MBBS, BSc (Med), FACSH, is a sexual health physician, Clinic 16, Royal North Shore Hospital and Manly Sexual Health, New South Wales.

Linda Dayan, BMedSc, MBBS, DipRACOG, MM (VenSci), FACSH, MRCMA, is Director, Sexual Health Services, Northern Sydney Health, New South Wales.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is a common, sexually transmitted infection (STI). Up to 50% of women and men will not know they have been in contact with chlamydia or experience any symptoms of infection. If not treated, chlamydia may lead to infertility, pelvic pain and inflammation for both men and women.

Am I at risk?

Chlamydia is one of the most common STIs in young men and women. It is treatable and can be easily cured.

What tests?

The simplest test for chlamydia is a urine sample. Women can also have a swab taken from inside the vagina if they are having other tests performed, eg. Pap test.

Why is it important to be tested when you are pregnant?

Chlamydia can be transmitted to your baby during delivery. Sometimes this can lead to problems with your baby's eyes and/or lungs. However, chlamydia is easily treated and the antibiotics used are safe to take during pregnancy. Treating both you and your partner for chlamydia will also help prevent complications from occurring in the future.

What is the treatment?

Antibiotics are given to both you and your partner. Please discuss this with your doctor.

What do I do next?

Talk to your midwife or doctor about having a urine test.

HIV

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the virus that can cause AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome).

What is an HIV antibody test?

An HIV antibody test tells you whether you have been in contact with HIV.

Why is it important to have a test during pregnancy?

The incidence of HIV is rising, which is why it is important for pregnant women to be offered this test. There are many treatments available that will help HIV positive people live longer and healthier lives. If you are HIV positive and pregnant, these treatments and other protective measures can greatly reduce the possibility of passing the virus onto your baby.

What you need to know before you have an HIV test

It is good to know whether or not you may have been at risk of contact with the HIV virus. General risks include:

- unsafe sex (sex without a condom)
- having had several sexual partners or a partner who has had several sexual partners
- if you or your partner are from an overseas country where the rate of HIV is higher
- sharing needles for injecting drugs, and
- a blood transfusion in Australia before May 1985.

Who do I have to tell if I am HIV positive?

HIV is a notifiable disease. This means that a positive result has to be recorded for statistics. This is done using only coded names so that your confidentiality is maintained. In the event of a positive result, it is necessary to trace the contacts of that person so they can be offered testing and treatment. This is a confidential process. The blood sample taken for testing can also be coded so that your confidentiality is completely protected.

Source: Northern Sydney HIV and Sexual Health Services, New South Wales