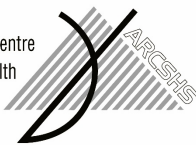


# Hepatitis B, C and HIV testing: Towards best practice

Emily Lenton

Jen Johnson

Australian  
Research Centre  
in Sex, Health  
& Society



**Blood Borne Virus**  
Sector Development Program



Melbourne, Australia

[www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs)

## Strategies, policies and best practice

### Eliminate HIV and hepatitis B, C as public health priorities

- Diagnosing 90% of all people living with chronic hepatitis B/ C, 95% of HIV
- Link to support, care and treatment
- Eliminate HIV, hepatitis C and hepatitis B stigma
- National testing policies: NEW basis for proficiency/ competency
- BBV Best practice consultation: Normalise and upscale testing



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## Stigma-sensitive practice

- Stigma-sensitive practice involves health practitioners acknowledging that stigma may significantly impact on people's experiences of being tested for BBVs.
- It involves consciously creating an environment where clients feel safe, where cultural context and identity are respected, and where confidentiality and privacy is maintained and preserved to the highest possible degree.
- Managing own judgements and belief systems



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## Language, assumptions and stigma

- Consider terms that challenge stigma and encourage open discussion
- Talking about drug use (not drug abuse/ addiction, not all injecting is problematic)
- Never assume a sexual partner is of the opposite sex



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## Pre test discussion | Gaining informed consent

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Confidentiality and notification</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informed consent</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Testing history</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health literacy</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basic information about BBVs</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stigma-sensitive discussion about risk &amp; transmission</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implications of positive result and supports</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Process of delivering the result</li> </ul> | <p><b>Open – ended questions</b></p> <p>“Have you ever been tested before? How was that?”</p> <p>“These viruses are passed on through blood via ... (state activities)”.</p> <p>“What do you know about HIV, hepatitis B and/ or C?” (health literacy, BBV information)</p> <p>“We can either discuss your reason for testing and any specific concerns you have, or I can just go through the basic information about HIV and the testing process without needing to talk about your personal situation.” (Stigma sensitive)</p> <p>“When was the last time you <u>had</u> to share injecting equipment?” (Stigma sensitive)</p> |
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## Window period for blood tests

Test	Window period
HIV combined antibody/ antigen test (4 <sup>th</sup> generation test)	Up to 6 weeks
Hepatitis C antibody test	Up to 3 months
Hepatitis C PCR test	Up to 3 weeks
Hepatitis B surface antigen	Up to 3 months

- A blind spot on the test: A person may test negative despite having virus and being infectious
- Period of time from when the virus enters the body and when the it is detectable by the test

“If the test we do today is positive, that means that you have hepatitis C antibodies.”

“A positive result for antibodies does not mean you have a current infection. A further test, looking for the virus itself is needed to confirm if you have a current infection.”



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## Post test discussion | Conveying the result

### Negative

- Give result and allow response
- Check window period, need for further testing
- Partners and contacts

### Positive

- In person or over the phone?
- Prepare
- Immediate needs on the day of diagnosis
- Information about transmission and prevention
- Support, disclosure and contact tracing
- Follow up appointment



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## Resources

- National HIV, hepatitis C and hepatitis B testing policies
- Decision-making charts
- HIV, viral hepatitis & STIs: A guide for primary care providers

[www.ashm.org.au/resources](http://www.ashm.org.au/resources)

- HIV and hepatitis pre and post test discussion in Victoria: Consultation report (November 2017) [HIV and hepatitis pre and post test discussion in Victoria \(PDF File 1.4 MB\)](#)



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