

Information Leaflet

Blood-borne Viruses (HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C)

Patients wishing to have fertility treatment require viral screening as part of their investigations. Viral status affects how your eggs, sperm and/or embryos are processed and stored in the laboratory. Viral screening is in place to ensure that the risk of passing blood-borne viruses on to others is as low as possible. Viral screening protects our patients and their eggs, sperm, and embryos, in addition to protecting our staff. Patients who are seeking treatment with donated gametes or embryos can request information about the donor's screening status (e.g., viral, genetic). Patients can also request information on the sensitivity and suitability of any tests. It is important to note that screened gamete providers can still be a carrier of genetic disease or infection. Each patient and partner (if applicable) who will be having eggs, sperm and/or embryos stored will require the following investigations, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis B and C. You will be required to sign a consent form which gives the staff permission to take the blood sample and send this for testing.

Please do ask a member of staff if you have any questions, alternatively more information regarding these viruses can be found at:

- HIV aware: www.hivaware.org.uk
- National Aids Trust: www.nat.org.uk
- Terrence Higgins Trust: www.tht.org.uk
- Averting AIDS and HIV (AVERT): www.avert.org
- NICE Guidelines Hepatitis B: [Hepatitis B | Health topics A to Z | CKS | NICE](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg165/documents/hepatitis-b-scope2)
- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg165/documents/hepatitis-b-scope2>
- British Liver trust: Hepatitis B - [Hepatitis B - British Liver Trust](https://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/hepatitis-b)
- NHS (2018) Hepatitis C <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-c/>
- Hepatitis C: Hepatitis C - [Hepatitis C - British Liver Trust](https://www.britishlivertrust.org.uk/hepatitis-c)
- [Home | British Association for Sexual Health and HIV \(bashh.org\)](http://www.bashh.org)

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General questions

How can infection with blood-borne viruses be prevented?

The main ways to prevent infection with blood-borne viruses is to avoid activities that put you at risk, such as sharing needles and having sex without a condom. Vaccination for hepatitis B if you are at high risk (e.g., health care/laboratory worker) is recommended.

What happens if my test is positive?

If your test is positive, you will be contacted without delay by the medical team at The Fertility Hewitt Centre and referred to another hospital for specialist care, which will include counselling and if required possible treatment. As each hospital has their own process you will be guided accordingly by the specialist team you are referred to.

Will I be able to undergo treatment without being tested?

If you wish for us to freeze and store any “spare” embryos created during your treatment cycle, then you must be tested prior to treatment. The Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) is our governing body that upholds fertility law. The HFEA requires any patient and partner (where applicable) to be screened before you are starting treatment to ensure the storage requirements for your eggs, sperm and embryos are possible.

If there is a new diagnosis, there will be a delay in the start of any treatment to ensure safety of all patients and staff and to discuss on an individual basis any changes there may be to your treatment process.

This leaflet can be made available in different formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

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