

Blood borne infection screening

GEM Centre

Introduction

This leaflet is provided by the Community Paediatric team at The Royal Wolverhampton Hospital NHS Trust and is based on UASC Health document (www.UASCHealth.org) which provides clinical guidance to support the health needs of our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children population. This leaflet provides information for young people and their carers regarding blood borne infection screening.

Why do I need a blood test?

The doctor you met today has recommended that you have a blood test. The blood test is looking for the following infections: Hepatitis B; Hepatitis C; Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and Syphilis. It is important for you to understand why we want you to have the test, but it is your decision whether to have the blood test or not.

How will the test be done and who will know whether I have an infection?

You will have blood taken using a needle, usually near your elbow. This is done by a Phlebotomist (a person who does blood tests as their job) the test result is usually back within three weeks.

The doctor you have met today will contact you. If the blood tests show that you have no infection, you will be sent a letter. Otherwise, you will be offered another appointment to discuss the results and you will have an interpreter present to help you understand the discussions better, unless you choose to opt out of having one.

The results of your blood test will be given to you and to your GP, and to other doctors who will look after you to treat infections. Nobody else will be told unless you want them to be. It is important that you have support in looking after your health so you may want to discuss this with an adult that you trust.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

How might I have caught these infections?

These infections can all be passed from person to person through the following means:

- The infections can be passed on from a mother to her unborn baby. Some children are born with infections that they are not aware of until they are much older
- Your doctor might think that you have been at risk from infection because you are from a part of the world where the infections are more common
- During travelling to England some children might also be put in situations where they catch infections
- Through sexual intercourse or blood, for example if you share a needle with someone who has an infection.

Why is it useful for me to find out if I have an infection?

Most people with infections, especially if they were born with them, will feel fit and healthy for a long time not displaying any symptoms. It is also possible to have more than one infection at the same time.

Not all infections can be cured, but medications can prevent the disease getting worse, and help keep people healthy. Without treatment and monitoring, all of these infections can cause people to become severely ill.

It is also important to know if you have an infection, so you can learn how to stop it being passed on to other people.

What will happen if I have got one of these infections in my blood?

An appointment will be arranged for you to see a specialist doctor with an interpreter.

They will talk to you about the treatment that you need, and they will organize for you to have your health checked regularly.

What are these infections?

Hepatitis B virus

Hepatitis B is a virus that affects the liver. This virus can cause short-term (acute) or persistent (chronic) infection. Some people recover completely after a short term illness however, if you become unwell, you may need treatment in a hospital. In some the virus can cause persistent infection if not treated, which you may not be aware of straight away as you may not show symptoms of this infection until later on. Persistent infections can damage and in some people it can lead to liver cancer.

If your blood test shows that you have this viral infection, you will be referred to a specialist doctor (Infectious disease specialist or a liver specialist). The doctor can start you on a treatment plan with antiviral medications, along with regular follow up appointments to monitor your progress.

Hepatitis C virus

Hepatitis C is another virus that can damage the liver. In most people the liver damage is mild and some are able to clear infection naturally. Some people will remain without symptoms, but will continue to have persistent infections which can lead to scarring of the liver or liver cancer in later adult life.

Treatment can clear the infection in the majority of cases. If the blood test shows you have the infection, you will be referred to a specialist (infection specialist or liver specialist), who will manage your treatment plan and offer follow-up appointments. The treatment for this virus has advanced in recent years and the aim of treatment is to clear the virus from your body, through oral antiviral medications and injections (Interferon).

HIV

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks the body's defense system that fights infections (immune system). It is a lifelong condition for which currently there is no cure, and leads to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). This stops the body fighting off infections that otherwise a healthy body would be able to do.

With appropriate management, HIV is neither a life-threatening nor a life-limiting condition. If left untreated, however, the weakened immune system will not be able to fight back at all, potentially resulting in you becoming very poorly and requiring hospital treatment.

If the blood test shows you are infected with HIV, you will be referred to a specialist doctor (infectious disease specialist or sexual health specialist), who will help to treat you with medications. These medicines work by keeping HIV under control at very low levels in the body, which allows the immune system to recover. Although these medicines control the HIV virus, they do not cure the infection.

HIV treatments have improved so much that it is now possible to lead a normal length life, and for women with HIV to have babies who are not infected with the virus.

Syphilis

Syphilis is a bacterial infection that is either caught from sexual intercourse, or is passed on to a baby from a mother who had the infection whilst she was pregnant. It can cause sores and skin rashes at first, and make people feel unwell. If it is not treated it then affects different parts of the body, including the brain, bones and teeth.

If your blood test shows you have syphilis, you will be referred to a specialist (infectious disease and sexual health specialist). This infection is usually treated with antibiotics (Penicillin) and Syphilis is fully curable. If you are allergic to Penicillin, you will be treated with alternative antibiotic.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

You can contact the Children in Care team at the New Cross Hospital by speaking to the Children and Young People in Care Administrator on 01902 444351 between 10am to 4pm, weekdays only.

Reference

https://www.uaschealth.org/resources/bloodborne_infections

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。