HIV Post-exposure Prophylaxis

Information and consent form for patients

What is the risk?
You can become infected with HIV if you have been exposed to blood and other body fluids from someone who is already infected. However, the risk is not high. Studies on health care workers, who were exposed to infected blood through injection or broken skin, show that only about 1 in 300 became infected.

The following table estimates the risk of becoming infected with HIV each time you have sex or share a needle with an HIV-positive person.

Table: Per-contact risk of HIV transmission from an HIV-positive person: selected exposures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure</th>
<th>Estimated Risk of HIV infection per exposure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupational exposure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlestick injury</td>
<td>3 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mucous membrane (eg nose or mouth) splash</td>
<td>0.9 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unprotected sexual exposure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anal intercourse (receptive)</td>
<td>1 to 30 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaginal intercourse (receptive)</td>
<td>1 to 2 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insertive anal/vaginal intercourse</td>
<td>0.3 to 0.9 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral sex (receptive)</td>
<td>Unknown but much less than 0.5 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needle sharing</td>
<td>1 to 10 per 1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recent new data also demonstrates that your risk of acquiring HIV infection is markedly increased if you have recently acquired genital herpes infection. If this is the case please inform your doctor.

What is PEP?
Studies in health care workers and in animals show that treatment with anti-HIV drugs soon after exposure to HIV may prevent infection, but the evidence is not clear. This treatment is called post-exposure prophylaxis or PEP. We know that PEP reduces the risk of HIV infection after exposure, but not in every case.

The Department of Health and some other States believe that PEP should be considered after high-risk exposure to HIV. Since you and your doctor feel that you have had a high-risk exposure to someone infected with HIV, you are now being offered a free four-week course of PEP (referred to as NPEP because your exposure is non-occupational).

The doctor has given you information to help you decide if you want to take NPEP treatment. The final decision is yours. However, you must start NPEP as early as possible after being exposed to HIV, within 24 – 36 hours if possible, and definitely within 72 hours. The sooner you start the treatment, the better the chance of it working.

Factors in deciding to take NPEP
In deciding what to do, you really need to think about the following:

- The real chance of becoming infected with HIV following a definite exposure is low, especially outside a work setting (see the table above).
- We still don’t really know how well NPEP works. One study showed that treatment with a drug called zidovudine (or AZT) soon after needlestick exposure in health care workers greatly reduced the risk of HIV transmission, so it is recommended for high-risk occupational injuries. Using more than one type of anti-HIV drug is probably better than one drug, such as AZT and we now routinely issue NPEP as Combidivir® (AZT + lamivudine). This is taken twice daily for four weeks.
The risk of getting HIV varies according to how you were exposed to the infection and how healthy you are. This includes the amount of HIV in the infected person’s blood, and if you or they already have a sexually transmitted infection.

It is particularly important to practice safe sex with any partner for at least three months after risky exposure. If you inject drugs it is important not to share injecting equipment. Be aware that your blood or body fluids could potentially be a hazard to others.

Many people using NPEP show some side effects such as nausea (feeling sick) and stomach upsets, headaches and tiredness.

There is no evidence that using these drugs for a short time has any long-term effects, but because this treatment is new, we cannot be sure of this.

If you decide to take the treatment you must tell the doctor of any drugs you are taking. This includes prescription, non-prescription and illegal drugs.

If you are or might be pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding, you can take Combivir® or other antiviral drugs if necessary. However, it is important to talk to your doctor or a specialist in HIV medicine before you begin any treatment.

It is important to stick to the treatment in the way your doctor tells you. Write down what to do, and don’t be afraid to ask questions or phone up the doctor later if you are unsure of something.

You need to see your doctor again as soon as the treatment is finished, and then at about three months and six months after exposure. Your doctor will take some blood to test if you have developed HIV infection.

Monitoring of NPEP

To understand how well NPEP treatment works, the Department of Health is collecting information on people who have the treatment. Your doctor will ask you:

- how you think you were exposed to HIV
- whether you decided to take NPEP
- the type of treatment you receive
- how you felt about the treatment, including any side-effects, and
- results of your blood tests over the six-month period after your exposure.

The information will be completely confidential – your doctor will only give us your date of birth and your medical record number so we can link all the information we receive during the six months after your exposure.

I have read and understood the above. I have also discussed the use of NPEP with
Dr .................................

After thinking about the information I have been given, I have decided to take*not to take* post-
exposure prophylaxis. (*Strike out whichever answer is not appropriate)

Signed:............................................  Print full name:...........................................

Witness:............................................  Print full name:...........................................

Date:.................................................