

HIV ANTIBODY TEST INFORMATION FORM FOR INSURANCE APPLICANT

AIDS

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a life-threatening disorder of the immune system, caused by a virus, HIV. The virus is transmitted by sexual contact with an infected person, from an infected mother to her newborn infant, or by exposure to infected blood (as in needle sharing during IV drug use). Persons at high risk of contracting AIDS include males who have had sexual contact with another man, intravenous drug users, hemophiliacs, and persons who have had sexual contact with any of these persons. AIDS does not typically develop until a person has been infected with HIV for several years. A person may remain free of symptoms for years after becoming infected. Infected persons have a 25 percent to 50 percent chance of developing AIDS over the next ten years.

The HIV antibody test:

Before consenting to testing, please read the following important information:

1. Purpose. This test is being run to determine whether you may have been infected with HIV. If you are infected, you are probably not insurable. This test is not a test for AIDS; AIDS can only be diagnosed by medical evaluation.

2. Positive test results. If you test positive, you should seek medical follow-up with your personal physician. If your test is positive, you may be infected with HIV.

3. Accuracy. An HIV test will be considered positive only after confirmation by a laboratory procedure that the state health officer has determined to be highly accurate. Nonetheless, the HIV antibody test is not 100 percent accurate. Possible errors include:

a. False positives: This test gives a positive result, even though you are not infected. This happens rarely and is more common in persons who have not engaged in high-risk behavior. Retesting should be done to help confirm the validity of a positive test.

b. False negatives: The test gives a negative result, even though you are infected with HIV. This happens most commonly in recently infected persons; it takes at least 4 to 12 weeks for a positive test result to develop after a person is infected.

4. Side effects. A positive test result may cause you significant anxiety. A positive test may result in uninsurability for life, health, or disability insurance policies for which you may apply in the future. Although prohibited by law, discrimination in housing, employment, or public accommodations may result if your test results become known to others. A negative result may create a false sense of security.

5. Disclosure of results. A positive test result will be reported to you in one of the following ways. You may choose to have information about a positive test result communicated to you through your physician or through the alternative testing site. If you do not designate a physician or an alternative testing site to receive the information, the information about a positive test result will be reported to the Iowa Department of Public Health, and the Iowa Department of Public Health will contact you.

6. Confidentiality. Like all medical information, HIV test results are confidential. An insurer, insurance agent, or insurance-support organization is required to maintain the confidentiality of HIV test results. However, certain disclosures of your test results may occur, including those authorized by consent forms that you may have signed as part of your overall application. Your test results may be provided to the Medical Information Bureau, a national insurance data bank. Your insurance agent will provide you with additional written information about this subject at your request.

7. Prevention. Persons who have a history of high-risk behavior should change these behaviors to prevent getting or giving AIDS, regardless of whether they are tested. Specific important changes in behavior include safe sex practices (including condom use for sexual contact with someone other than a long-term monogamous partner) and not sharing needles.

8. Information. Further information about HIV testing and AIDS can be obtained by calling the National AIDS hotline at 1-800-342-2437.

