



Recommendations for HIV Testing in Tuberculosis Patients

San Mateo County provides the following HIV testing recommendations, based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH):

WHO should be tested for HIV?

All patients with a confirmed *or* suspected diagnosis of TB.

The recommendations are aimed to eliminate missed opportunities for HIV screening and reduce significant barriers to HIV testing in health care settings.

- CDC recommends HIV screening for all patients for whom TB is suspected or confirmed, after the patient is notified that testing will be performed, unless the patient declines (i.e., opt-out screening*).
- Routine HIV testing is also recommended for contacts of TB patients, local resources permitting.
- Persons at high risk for HIV infection should be screened for HIV at least annually.
- Prevention counseling and separate written consent for HIV testing is no longer required.

WHY should all patients be screened?

- The medical management of TB is altered in the presence of HIV infection.
- HIV infection is the most important risk factor for progression from latent TB infection to TB disease, and this progression can happen very rapidly among HIV-infected persons.
- TB outbreaks can rapidly expand in HIV-infected patient groups.
- Risk behavior-based targeted HIV testing by providers fails to identify persons who are HIV infected. This is because many individuals may not perceive themselves to be at risk for HIV or do not disclose their risks.
- Routine HIV testing reduces the stigma associated with testing.
- When HIV is diagnosed early, appropriate interventions can lead to improved health outcomes, including slower progression and reduced mortality.
- Monitoring the prevalence of HIV infection among persons with TB helps to detect the spread of HIV infection into new areas and population groups.

*Opt-out screening is defined as performing HIV testing after notifying the patient that the test will be performed. Although the patient may decline or defer testing, it is strongly recommended. Pre-test counseling is not required beyond that used for any other routine clinical practice. Assent is inferred unless the patient declines testing. In California, opt-out HIV testing has been permitted since 2008. HIV results should be provided in the same manner as all other medical results.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control (2012). TB Elimination: Recommendations for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Screening in Tuberculosis (TB) Clinics. Retrieved from:
<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/factsheets/testing/HIVscreening.pdf>