

Dear Client

As part of your visa medical examination today the Embassy would like you to have an HIV blood test. The result will be provided to the relevant Australian/ Canadian or New Zealand Government health agencies

We would like to give you some information regarding the HIV test that you are about to have and what would happen in the unlikely event that a test comes back as positive. Equally we would like to ask you a few questions that would help us with further counselling if considered necessary.

Background information:

**HIV infection is now a treatable medical condition and the majority of those living with the virus remain fit and well on treatment.**

HIV is a virus that can be transmitted through blood transfusions, unsterile injection equipment, sexually or vertically from mother to child.

In order to establish whether someone is HIV positive, a blood sample is taken and screened for HIV 1 and 2 antibodies. The “window” period between an infection and the blood showing specific antibodies can be up to 12 weeks. We now use newer combination tests, where in addition to looking for antibodies, we look for part of the HIV virus particle as well (called a “p24”). This can reduce the “window period” to just 4 weeks. What this means is that the time between any likely infection from a sexual or blood exposure to detection can be narrowed down now to 4 weeks.

### **Negative result**

If your HIV result is negative, you have not had any exposure to the HIV virus and you are not in the “window period”, then nothing more needs doing.

If your test result is negative but you are in the window period, then we would recommend you having a repeat test (at a location of your choice) 4 weeks from the exposure.

### **Positive result**

If your test should come back as positive, then you would be invited back for a post test consultation and be seen by our HIV specialist. He would explain in details what this means and where to go from here.

A positive test always needs to be confirmed as there is a very small chance of this being a “false positive test” in certain circumstances.

If the test is indeed positive, then we would link you to local HIV services where you would be seen and further more detailed tests performed.

HIV testing is voluntary and done in a confidential way. Whilst you have the right to refuse an HIV test as this might have future implications, the embassies would not proceed with processing your application without the requested blood tests.

### **Implications of a positive result:**

A positive HIV result would have many implications. Insurance implications and occupational implications are what individuals are often concerned. Whilst this might be the case the arguments in favour of knowing a “positive HIV status” far outweigh the negative implications.

HIV is now a “chronic and treatable condition” but only if the HIV status is known. One third of all individuals in the UK that are HIV infected unaware of their condition. The HIV virus will destroy someone’s immune system and can lead to serious infections if unrecognised. If HIV status is known, treatment can be implemented at the appropriate time and individuals remain well.

We would be grateful if you could answer a few questions for us below:

- 1. Are you at risk of HIV infection?**
- 2. If yes, was your risk less than 4 weeks ago?**
- 3. Would you like the doctor or nurse to provide you with further information as far as the test is concerned?**

We normally only contact individuals in the unlikely event of a result being positive. Would you like to have your HIV result sent to you (letter/email) even if it is negative?

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Please let the doctor or nurse know if you would like any further information.

**Regarding Confidentiality, I am aware that:**

“Patients have a right to expect that information about them will be held in confidence by their doctors. Confidentiality is central to the trust between doctors and patients. Without assurances about confidentiality, patients may be reluctant to give doctors the information they need in order to provide good care”.

**I have read and understood the information given above and this is my signed consent to have an HIV test (and/or Hepatitis B and C) test for my visa medical examination.**

I understand that Your Excellent Health cannot comment on my likelihood of meeting the health requirement in case of a confirmed HIV diagnosis, since this is a matter for the relevant government of Australia/Canada or New Zealand to consider.

**Name----- Date -----**

**Date of Birth-----**

**Signature-----**

**Witness (nurse/doctor)-----**