

Inoculation Injury

What is an inoculation injury?

An inoculation injury is the accidental contamination of one person with the blood or body fluids of another.

In a healthcare setting this usually occurs in the following ways:

- An injury with a used needle, scalpel etc
- Human bites or scratches
- Splashes into eyes, mouth or broken skin etc.

Testing information

A member of staff has been accidentally exposed to your blood or body fluids during the course of their work. We are requesting to test your blood in order to assist the member of staff. This is standard practice based on national guidance from the Department of Health and the Health Protection Agency. Three specific viruses are covered in this information sheet. All three viruses can be present in your body without your knowledge. We ask every patient in this situation if we can test him or her for:

- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus): A virus that can be transmitted through blood, body fluids, and sexual exposure. Examples include sharing needles, syringes or equipment for drugs, tattoos, body piercing, through unscreened blood transfusions, and from mother to baby
- Hepatitis B: A virus that affects the liver and is passed on in the same way as HIV
- Hepatitis C: A virus that affects the liver and is usually passed on through blood or sharing needles or other equipment during recreational drug injecting. Other examples include tattoos, body piercing, and unscreened blood transfusions.

You can consent to be tested for

- All of these viruses
- Some of these viruses
- None of these viruses.

If you decide not to undertake a blood test this will not in any way affect the care that you receive.

Continued overleaf...

Originator: Infection Prevention and Control

What are the benefits of having these tests now?

You can have these viruses with or without any symptoms. If you have Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C virus, treatment can often help to cure you and reduce the damage to your liver. New treatments are available for individuals with HIV. The treatment for HIV may be more effective if it is given before any serious illness develops.

What are the possible issues for you of having these tests?

If the test identifies that you have one of the viruses, the benefits of knowing and receiving treatment as soon as possible, usually outweigh any disadvantages. Whilst waiting for the test results or when they arrive, you may experience some anxiety. For some people, a positive test result may have an affect on relationships with family and friends and for a very small number of people it may affect your ability to continue in your current job (e.g. certain medical roles). Your GP will be able to provide any further advice or support in these circumstances.

Who will be informed of your test results?

- Your GP will receive your test results which are normally available within two working days, sometimes further testing is needed and this may delay the results. If you test positive for any of the viruses your GP will inform you and will oversee your care. Your GP may wish you to be referred to a specialist doctor.
- The Trusts Occupational Health Department who will inform the staff member of the results to provide reassurance or enable prompt treatment if required.

Insurance

Undergoing a negative blood test will not affect future applications for insurance.

A positive test result can affect an individual's ability to get life assurance and other financial services.