

# CONSENT for HIV Testing

## *Information on HIV*

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV is spread through the exchange of blood, sexual fluids (semen and vaginal secretions) and sometimes breast milk. HIV can be transmitted from mother to baby during pregnancy or childbirth.

## *HIV Testing*

There are several laboratory tests for HIV. The most common is the antibody test, which is a blood test that detects antibodies produced by the body in response to infection with HIV.

The negative antibody test indicates that no detectable antibodies are present in the blood. The absence of antibodies may be because an individual is not infected with HIV or because detectable antibodies have not yet been made in response to infection. The production of these antibodies could take three months or longer. Therefore, in certain cases, an individual may be infected with HIV and yet test negative. Persons with a history of HIV risk behaviors within the past three to six months should consider retesting.

A positive antibody test consists of a repeatedly reactive (the same specimen testing positive twice) enzyme immunoassay (EIA) and a reactive Western blot (supplementary test). A positive antibody test means that an individual is infected with HIV; however, this does not necessarily mean that the individual has AIDS. Research indicates that early and regular medical care is important to the health of the person with AIDS. Certain treatments are now available to delay HIV-associated illness.

## *Means to Reduce Risk for Contracting or Spreading HIV*

Risk of contacting or spreading HIV can be reduced by avoiding or decreasing contact with blood and sexual fluids (semen and vaginal secretions). Some methods of decreasing contact include abstaining from sexual intercourse, limiting the number of sex partners, properly using condoms during sexual intercourse, not engaging in injecting drug use or, if this is not possible, using bleach and water to clean needles and syringes.

## *Disclosure of Test Results*

Positive HIV test results will be reported to the local and state health department. This information is protected by law and may be released only upon the tested individual's written authorization, for statistical purposes without individual identifying information, or as otherwise required or allowed by law.

## *Additional Sources of Information on HIV*

Additional information regarding testing for HIV is available through your county health department and, in the Phoenix metropolitan areas, (602) 234-2752; the Tucson metropolitan area (520) 326-2437, or outside the Phoenix area, 1-(800) 334-1540.

## *Consent*

My signature indicates that I acknowledge that I have received and understand the above information, and I voluntarily consent to and request HIV testing.

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Patient Signature

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Date