HIV HEALTH CHECKLIST

ABOUT THIS CHECKLIST
People with HIV should have some laboratory tests and vaccinations on a regular basis. You might want to keep your own file of test results. Also, keep track of any antiretroviral medications you take and when these change. This will be very helpful if you ever change health care providers.

ROUTINE LABORATORY TESTS
**CD4 (T-cell) Count (See fact sheet 124):** This test measures the strength of your immune system. It also indicates how urgent it is to start antiretroviral medications. It also indicates your risk of developing opportunistic infections (See fact sheet 500.) Higher results are better.

**Resistance test (See fact sheet 126):** This shows if your immune system is working. Get a baseline test and then every 3 or 4 months, if possible. "Baseline" is an initial reference value. This is usually measured when you first test HIV-positive or when you start antiretroviral treatment.

**Blood sugar (See fact sheet 123):** This measures diabetes or insulin resistance. Test at baseline and about once a year. Test in the morning after fasting overnight.

**Pap smear (See fact sheet 510):** Tests for abnormal cells in the anus or vagina. Test at baseline and once a year, or more often if abnormal cells are found. The cervical Pap smear is a standard test for women. Anal Pap smears are done at many centers in both men and women.

**Urinalysis:*** Looks for protein, sugar, or signs of infection in your urine. Test at baseline and periodically if you are taking medications that affect the kidneys.

**Tests for Sexually Transmitted Diseases:** Test at baseline and at least once a year, or if you have symptoms.

- **Syphilis** blood test
- **Gonorrhea** urine test for men; urine tests or vaginal swabs for women; throat/or anal swabs in people having oral and/or anal sex
- **Chlamydia** urine test or rectal or vaginal swab

**Hepatitis tests (See fact sheet 506):** Tests look for hepatitis antibodies and antigens for hepatitis A, B, and C. Positive results can lead to further tests, or treatment. A negative result test can suggest vaccination.

**Special Laboratory Tests**

**Chemistry Panel (See fact sheet 122):** This combination of tests measures various chemicals in your blood to see whether your body is working correctly. Test at baseline and every 3-6 months.

**Complete Blood Count (CBC, see fact sheet 121):** This test measures red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets (cells that help clot your blood if you get a cut). Test at baseline and every 3-6 months.

**Blood fats (Lipid Panel; see fact sheet 123):** This measures triglycerides and cholesterol. It helps show your risk of heart disease. Test at baseline and at least every year, or more often if you are taking medications that raise blood fats.

**HIV Tropism (See fact sheet 129):** Shows if your virus can be controlled by a new type of antiretroviral drug. Test only if your health care provider is considering using Maraviroc (a CCR5 blocker.)

**HIV load (See fact sheet 125):** This measures how quickly HIV is multiplying. Lower results are better. The best is "undetectable," but this does not mean "zero." This test shows how well your treatment is working. Get a baseline test and every 3 or 4 months. This test is not important for people who have not yet started treatment.

**Test for hidden (latent) tuberculosis (See fact sheet 518):** Shows if you have ever been exposed to tuberculosis (TB). Test at baseline. Test once a year if you are at high risk of exposure to TB. Positive test results should lead to further tests or treatment.

**VACCINATIONS**

**- Pneumonia:*** Protection lasts for about 5 years in people with HIV. There are 2 types of vaccine. Make sure your health care provider what knows about your vaccination history.

**- Hepatitis (See fact sheet 506):** Two hepatitis A vaccine shots are given. Hepatitis B vaccine is a series of three shots. Antibody tests will show if you are already immune. If this is the case, you don't need the vaccine. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C.

**- Flu shots:** are recommended in the fall for all people with HIV. FluMist nasal spray should not be used by people with HIV.

**- Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine usually gives life-long protection. If you did not get these vaccines as a child, you should get an MMR vaccination. However, this live vaccine is not recommended for people with a CD4 cell count below 200.

**- NOTE:** The original version of this fact sheet was adapted with permission from the article "Wellness Checklist" by Joel Gallant, MD that appeared in Positively Aware, September/October 2008.

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