

Never say 'HIV positive' verbally before a confirmatory test. A reactive 4th-generation result is preliminary only — confirm, then link to specialist care the same day. HIV is a notifiable condition in every Australian state and territory.

DELIVERING RESULTS — LANGUAGE

- **Negative:** reassure and document; repeat at 45 days if still within the window period; discuss PrEP if risk is ongoing
- **Reactive 4th-generation:** say 'preliminary reactive — needs confirmation' — don't say 'HIV positive' until the confirmatory test returns
- **Confirmed HIV-positive:** refer to an HIV physician the same day; notify the relevant state health department; arrange partner notification with the specialist
- **Indeterminate:** order HIV RNA PCR, seek specialist input, and repeat the 4th-generation test in 2–4 weeks

URGENT REFERRAL TRIGGERS

- A reactive 4th-generation result → refer to an HIV physician or sexual health clinic the same day
- Severe seroconversion symptoms, neurological signs, or inability to swallow → same-day specialist review
- A new diagnosis in pregnancy → urgent co-management with obstetrics and an HIV physician
- HIV with active TB → both are notifiable; specialist coordination is essential

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE — YOUR DUTY

HIV is notifiable in every Australian state and territory — in Victoria, in writing within 5 days of diagnosis. Confirm your own state's exact process and timeframe. Notification goes to the state health department, not Medicare or the testing laboratory; the requesting doctor and the lab may each have a separate duty — check your local requirements.

PARTNER NOTIFICATION

Arrange with the specialist managing the new diagnosis. Options include patient-led disclosure with support, provider referral (the clinic notifies contacts without naming the patient), or contact tracing via the state's partner notification service. Confidentiality protections apply throughout.

BILLING & TESTING ACCESS

No referral is required to request an HIV test. ART itself is initiated and PBS-prescribed via an HIV specialist (S100 prescriber), with GP shared care once stable. Confirm current MBS item numbers at mbsonline.gov.au; ASHM helpline 1800 022 226.

■ SAFETY

- Never confirm a diagnosis verbally as 'HIV positive' before the confirmatory test — use 'preliminary reactive' language until then
- Confirm your own state's notification process and timeframe — requirements and forms differ between jurisdictions
- Don't delay specialist referral on a reactive result while awaiting confirmation — same-day referral is appropriate

■ RED FLAGS / REFER

- Any reactive 4th-generation result → HIV physician or sexual health clinic the same day
- A new diagnosis in pregnancy → urgent co-management with obstetrics and an HIV physician
- HIV with active TB, or any diagnostic uncertainty → specialist coordination before proceeding