

Diagnosis of HIV infection in neonates born to HIV seropositive mothers.

Testing strategy vertical (mother-child) transmission

The accurate and timely detection of HIV in early infancy is very important for the medical management of children born to HIV-infected mothers.

Because maternal antibodies are passively transferred to the infant, HIV antibody testing cannot be used to diagnose infection until the age of 18 months. To overcome this problem the following testing strategy is used.

Standard Scheme	HIV DNA PCR	HIV RNA PCR	Serology
At birth (within 2 days, no umbilical cord blood!)	Highly recommended*	Optional	
At the age of 1 month (+/- 1-2 weeks)	Highly recommended*	Optional	
At the age of 2 months (1-2 weeks)	Recommended*		
At the age of 3 months (1-2 weeks)	Highly recommended*	Optional	
At the age of 6 months (1-2 weeks)	Optional*		
At the age of 18 months and later			Mandatory if no confirmed infection at this time
Work off in children not followed from birth			
At time of first presentation if no breastfeeding, or one month after weaning	Highly recommended	Optional	
One month later (minimum interval)	Highly recommended	Optional	
At the age of 18 months and later			Mandatory if no confirmed infection at this time

* If negative, take care that at least one HIV DNA PCR test is performed two weeks or more after completion of the neonatal antiretroviral prophylaxis regimen.

Remarks

1. This scheme applies only to children born from women with confirmed HIV infection; however in exceptional circumstances (for instance if the mother cannot be tested), the serological status of the child has to be determined before applying this scheme.
2. On the request it should be specified if it concerns HIV-1 and/or HIV-2 detection.

3. Please provide the following information on the request: name and chart number of the mother, antiviral medication (including date started and stopped).
4. A positive result should always be confirmed on a second sample.
5. A detectable RNA viral load should be confirmed by the presence of proviral DNA.

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Hôpital Erasme (Cliniques Universitaires de Bruxelles)



Marie-Luce Delforge
Tel.: +32 (0)2 555 57 83

Laboratoire de Référence SIDA
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Hôpital Universitaire Erasme
Laboratoire de Virologie
Route de Lennik, 808
1070 Bruxelles

Click [here](#) to visit the ARL website.

Instituut Tropische Geneeskunde



Katrien Fransen
Tel.: +32 (0)3 247 63 32
e-mail : kfransen@itg.be

AIDS-Referentielaboratorium
Instituut voor Tropische Geneeskunde
Departement klinische wetenschappen
Nationalestraat 155
2000 Antwerpen

Click [here](#) to visit the ARL website.

Université de Liège, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Liège



Marie-Pierre Hayette (Director)
Tel.: +32 (0)4 366 24 54

Dolorès Vaira
e-mail: dvaira@chu.ulg.ac.be
Tel.: +32 (0)4 366 24 48

Christiane Gérard
Tel.: +32 (0)4 366 75 39

Laboratoire de Référence SIDA
Université de Liège
Domaine Universitaire du Sart-Tilman
Laboratoire de Microbiologie Clinique
Niveau 2 - Bât. B23
4000 Sart-Tilman via Liège 1

Tel. ARL: +32 (0)4 366 75 39

Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Section: Universitair Ziekenhuis Brussel)



Denis Pierard
e-mail: labomicro@uzbrussel.be

AIDS Referentie Laboratorium
VUB, UZ-Brussel
Laboratorium voor Klinische Biologie
Laarbeeklaan 101, 1090 Brussel

Tel.: +32 (0)2 477 50 01
Click [here](#) to visit the ARL website.

Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Section: Universitair Medisch Centrum Sint-Pieter)



Sigi Van den Wijngaert
Tel.: +32 (0)2 535 45 31

AIDS Referentie Laboratorium
Universitair Medisch Centrum Sint-Pieter
Hoogstraat 185
1000 Brussel

Tel.: +32 (0)2 535 45 30

Universiteit Gent, Universitair Ziekenhuis Gent



Chris Verhofstede
Tel: +32 (0)9 332 51 61
e-mail: chris.verhofstede@ugent.be

AIDS Referentie Laboratorium
Universiteit Gent
Laboratorium voor Bacteriologie en Virologie
Blok A, 3de verdieping
De Pintelaan 185
9000 Gent

Tel.: +32 (0)9 332 51 61
Fax: +32 (0)9 332 38 41
Click [here](#) to visit the ARL website

Université Catholique de Louvain, Cliniques Universitaires Saint-Luc



Patrick Goubau
Tel.: +32(0)2 764 54 92
e-mail: laboratoire-sida@uclouvain.be

Université Catholique de Louvain, Cliniques Universitaires Saint-Luc
Laboratoire de Référence SIDA
Unité de Microbiologie
Avenue Hippocrate 5492
1200 Bruxelles

Tel.: +32 (0)2 764 54 92
Fax: +32 (0)2 764 54 22
Click [here](#) to visit the ARL website.

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universitaire Ziekenhuizen Leuven



Marc Van Ranst

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universitaire Ziekenhuizen Leuven
Zone Medische Diagnostiek, Activiteitscentrum AIDS
Referentie Laboratorium
Gasthuisberg - CDG8
Herestraat 49
3000 Leuven

Tel.: +32 (0)16 34 79 08
Fax: +32 (0)16 34 79 00

Scientific Institute of Public Health (IPH, WIV-ISP)



André Sasse (scientific secretariat)

Tel.: +32 (0)2 642 50 39

e-mail: Andre.Sasse@wiv-isp.be

Institut Scientifique de Santé Publique - Wetenschappelijk
Instituut Volksgezondheid
Public Health and Surveillance - Infectious Diseases Unit
Rue Juliette Wytsmanstraat 14
1050 Brussels

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