

## **Repeat testing: counseling to choose clinic-based or home-based self testing**

*Instructions: This is a tool to be used by health care workers (HCW) to help guide a participant through the issues that might impact her decision about whether to choose clinic-based or home-based testing. This is not meant to be a script (although it does include some suggested language that may be helpful for HCW) or an exhaustive list, but rather a starting point for the counseling discussion. The counseling session should end with the participant making a choice for herself about whether she would like to choose clinic-based or home-based self testing and whether she wants to invite her partner for testing or carry home an HIV test kit for the partner.*

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. At this time, I hope we can have a discussion about HIV testing. I am going to share with you some of the issues that you might want to consider as you make the decision about where and how you want to test for HIV. I'll ask you to think about your own experience and to share freely with me what things are more and less important to you as you make this decision. There are no right or wrong answers and no write or wrong choices. I want to support you to choose the type of test that you are comfortable with, that will give you the correct test result, and that can make sure that you test again for HIV.

- **Getting to Clinic:** Some women struggle to come to the clinic later in their pregnancy because of challenges with transport costs or transport means. They may face challenges taking time away from work or getting childcare.
  - Tell me about whether you think it would be hard or easy to come to the clinic later in your pregnancy. Are things like transport, child care, or time off of work challenges for you?
- **Storing the Self-Test:** The test kit that you do at home needs to be stored in a cool place that is not in the sun. Some women also prefer to store the kit in a place that is private so that other people cannot find it.
  - How important to you is it to keep the test kit private? Do you have a place at home that is cool where you could store the test kit?
- **Where to Take the Self-Test:** When it is time to take the test, it is important to have a place where you can stay for 30 minutes. For some women, it is important that the place is private so that they can keep others from learning the results of the test or knowing that they are using the test kit. Other women feel comfortable testing in a space that is not private.
  - Tell me about where you think you might take the test that is done at home.
- **Using the Self-Test:** When the test is done at home, there is no health care worker to perform the test kit. A woman must feel comfortable understanding the test instructions, using the test kit, and interpreting the results correctly. Sometimes women prefer to have a trusted person that they can ask for support if they need help.
  - What do you think would be the big challenges about understanding how to do this test correctly? Who do you think you could ask for support if you need help?
- **Plans if a Test is Positive:** It is important to think about how you would prefer to be supported if the test turns positive. Some women prefer to have a health care worker with them at the time when a test is performed to offer counseling and to perform a confirmatory test immediately. Some women prefer to test at home in private and then call a health care worker on the phone to receive counseling and then schedule a confirmatory test later.
  - What would you prefer if your test turns positive? Do you have a phone that you can use to call the study clinic for counseling and to set up confirmatory testing?
- **Blood vs. Oral Testing:** Both blood tests and oral tests work very well in testing for HIV. Some women feel more comfortable collecting their own saliva alone. Other women feel more comfortable with a health care worker taking a blood sample by finger prick.
  - Do you feel more comfortable with a saliva sample that you collect alone, or a blood sample that a health care worker takes from you?

- **Exposure to HIV:** Both blood tests and oral tests work very well in testing for HIV. They are both very accurate. However, after someone gets HIV, it takes longer for the saliva self test to turn positive than the blood tests done at a health facility. This means that someone who has gotten HIV recently might test negative on a saliva test, but still have HIV. This is called a window period. Some women prefer to test at a health facility so that they find out sooner if they have HIV.
  - What do you think you would prefer?

## SUMMARIZE

It sounds like you are saying that you are concerned about [summarize the concerns noted during the previous discussion with client]. It also sounds like it is important to you that [summarize the factors that are important to client]. Based on all of this, what do you think is the testing option that works best for you?

*[Move forward to this next section if the client wishes to use home-based self testing.]*

Now we will talk together about whether or not you would like to take a test kit home to your partner so that he can test himself. We will now discuss some of the concerns that women have and discuss how you feel these apply to your life. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer and no right or wrong choice; I want to support you to make the choice that is comfortable for you and your partner. At the end we can make a discussion together about whether or not you would like to take a test kit for your partner today.

- **Comfort Asking Partner to Test:** Sometimes women feel comfortable inviting their partners to come to the clinic with them to get tested for HIV. Sometimes women feel more comfortable bringing a test kit to their partners at home.
  - What do you think would make you feel more comfortable and why?
- **What Will Help Partner Test:** Some women feel like their partner would not get an HIV test if they were invited to the clinic, but would test at home. Some women feel that their partners would not accept HIV testing if it is offered in the home, but could accept coming to the clinic
  - What setting do you think would help your partner test for HIV?
- **Comfort Performing a Partner's Self-Test:** When the test is done at home, there is no health care worker to perform the test kit. Your partner can perform the test on himself with or without your help. A woman or her partner must feel comfortable understanding the test instructions, using the test kit, and interpreting the results correctly.
  - What do you think would be the big challenges that you or your partner would face about understanding how to do this test correctly and what the test results mean? Do you think your partner would accept help performing or interpreting the test?
- **Plan if Partner Tests Positive:** It is important to think about how you and your partner might prefer to be supported if your partner's test turns positive. Some people prefer to have a health care worker with them at the time when a test is performed to offer counseling and to perform a confirmatory test immediately. Some people prefer to test at home in private and then call a health care worker on the phone to receive counseling and then schedule a confirmatory test later.
  - What would you prefer if your partner's test turns positive? What do you think your partner would prefer if his test turns positive? Do you have a phone that you can use to call the study clinic for counseling and to set up confirmatory testing?
- **Safety:** Some women fear that their partner could be angry or violent if he gets a positive HIV test result. Some women feel like they would prefer to have a counselor present in case their partner turns positive. Other women do not feel like their partner could be angry or violent and feel okay testing without a counselor present.
  - How do you think your partner would react if you tested positive? Do you think that you could be unsafe if your partner tests positive at home? Do you think that you could be unsafe if your partner tests positive at a clinic?

**SUMMARIZE**

It sounds like you are saying that in your partnership, you are concerned about [summarize the concerns noted during the previous discussion with client]. It also sounds like it is important to you that [summarize the factors that are important to client]. Based on all of this, would you like to carry home an HIV test kit for your partner or would you like to invite him to the clinic for a HIV test?