

COVID-19 Interim HIV PrEP Testing Guidelines

Interim COVID-19 HIV Prep Guidelines

1. For patients established on HIV PrEP:
 - Maintain screening for HIV, syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea, creatinine and pregnancy test every 3 months.
 - Defer annual Hepatitis B, and C serology in asymptomatic clients.
2. Initiation of HIV PrEP during the COVID pandemic should be an individual case by case decision.

Rationale

- HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) service delivery must continue to address the needs of those who are at highest risk for HIV transmission; despite the ongoing messaging to support social distancing.
- Alberta is experiencing an unprecedented STI outbreak. There were more than 2200 cases of infectious syphilis in Alberta in 2019 with 73 cases of congenital syphilis, resulting in 14 infant deaths, diagnosed since the beginning of the outbreak in 2015.
- Designated PrEP prescribers are seeking guidance with interpretation of recent laboratory memorandums regarding reducing routine laboratory tests during the pandemic.
- STI care including HIV PrEP and HIV PEP is considered essential ambulatory care during the COVID – 19 pandemic.
- Laboratories in Alberta will continue to process essential STI/HIV blood work during the COVID pandemic.
- Deferral of Hepatitis B and C is expected to have minimum impact on patients, as many will have received immunization for Hepatitis B and patients will have received screening for Hepatitis C upon initiation of HIV PrEP and annually.