



Why does MFS test blood?

As part of every patient's care, MFS must undertake several blood tests. These can usually be done from one blood sample obtained when a patient attends the clinic before starting treatment.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) insists that these tests are carried out to reduce the risk of cross infection during the storage of sperm, eggs, or embryos in liquid nitrogen. All MFS patients are screened before treatment begins. Occasionally another blood sample may be required because of technical difficulties.

The blood tests are confidential and only MFS staff involved in the patient's care will know the results. No one else will be told about the results without the patient's consent.

What infections does MFS test for?

- HIV
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis C

Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C

Hepatitis B and C infect the liver. They can remain in the blood for many years before causing signs of illness. Without a test, a person may not know if they are infected. If the test is positive, MFS will refer a patient for specialist help.

HIV

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Infection with HIV is less common than Hepatitis B or C. HIV attacks the immune system and destroys the body's defences against infection and disease. It can take years for HIV to do enough damage for someone to become ill and often someone will not know that they are infected unless they have a test. If a patient's result is positive for HIV, they will not be able to continue their treatment at MFS, but can be referred for specialist help and treatment.

How can these infections spread?

The main ways these infections can be transmitted are:

- through unprotected sex with a man or woman

- by receiving unscreened blood or blood products (all blood in the UK is screened)
- from mother to child during pregnancy and birth
- sharing needles or other drug-injecting equipment that contains traces of infected blood
- having an injection of another person's blood (eg by a needlestick injury or body piercing from contaminated equipment)

Any patient who wishes to discuss any of these issues before their next appointment should contact a member of the MFS nursing staff.

When are the results available?

Results will be available at the patient's/s' next appointment after the treatment assessment. Results may only be given to the person who has been tested and so preferably, both partners should attend the results appointment together. If any problem is found, or if there is something the patient should know, a member of the MFS team will contact them before their next visit.

Can a patient still get life insurance?

Having a test has no implication for current or future life insurance policies. However, any positive result may need to be declared on insurance health questionnaires and could have important insurance implications. A patient should check their own policy for further details.

What if a patient doesn't want to be tested?

This information may be a lot to take in and a patient may postpone having these tests if they want more time to think things over. **However, MFS must do these tests before any treatment begins or before eggs, sperm or embryos may be stored.**

What information is kept about these tests?

A patient who agrees to have these blood tests should be aware that:

- MFS will keep a record of any test results as they may be needed in the future. This information will include a number of personal details such as the patient's name, address and date of birth

- information gathered from these blood tests may be used for research or audit purposes, to improve the clinic's knowledge of these infections and also to improve the service MFS provides. MFS would seek a patient's consent in advance of any research that requires personal information
- all healthcare professionals have a legal duty to keep patients' personal information confidential
- all information that is collected is stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act

For more details about the information MFS keeps following routine infection screening, please ask a member of the MFS clinical team.

What is included in the cost of routine infection screening?

Routine infection screening is included in the treatment assessment cost and includes screening for Hepatitis B and C and for HIV for both partners being treated. Screening results remain current for about 12 months and will need repeating after such time if treatment continues.

What is not included in the cost?

- non-standard tests required for a usual treatment assessment
- any other fertility investigations, treatments or preservation services for either partner

Costs

Please refer to the current List of Charges in either the Patient Finance Information leaflet or via midlandfertility.com/fees.

Further information

Please visit midlandfertility.com and search for 'Treatment Assessment' or read the following MFS infosheet:

- Treatment Assessment (downloadable from midlandfertility.com by searching for 'MFS Treatment Literature', or in hardcopy from MFS).