

# **Pregnancy testing in the pharmacy**

Pregnancy testing is a professional service which is sometimes offered by community pharmacists. The following notes are offered as guidance.

## **Confidentiality**

The pharmacist must keep all information provided by the patient and the result of the test confidential and only disclose information with the consent of the patient.

## **Advertising**

Pregnancy testing is regarded as a professional service and therefore should only be advertised in accordance with service specification 1 of the Code of Ethics.

## **Facilities for carrying out the test**

A reliable method of testing should be used. It is important that care is taken to prevent contamination which can be caused by the handling of samples of urine. This should be achieved by the use of a room separate from that used for dispensing. This should be maintained in a clean and tidy condition and all working surfaces should be finished with a smooth, impervious and washable material. Adequate lighting should be provided so that the results of the test can be read correctly. A separate sink should be provided.

Procedures which ensure that no confusion occurs between samples must be devised and followed. Persons carrying out tests should wash their hands before leaving the working area. All cuts and grazes on hands or on exposed parts of the body must be covered with waterproof dressings.

## **Request for a pregnancy test**

A signed and dated confirmation of the request should be obtained. The form on which confirmation is obtained should state the limits of accuracy of the test. All questions relating to the test should be asked by the pharmacist and the answers recorded in writing.

## **Records**

A written record of the result of the test, together with information provided by the client and the type of test and batch number of the test materials, should be retained by the pharmacist for at least one year. Such records must be stored safely to preserve confidentiality.

## **Communication of the result**

The result of the test should be provided in writing on a standard form. If it is necessary to convey the result by telephone, the pharmacist should be satisfied that the person requesting the information is the person who requested the test.

A written confirmation of the result should be provided even when the result has been communicated by telephone.

The form should be dated and give the name and address of the client. The result should be given as positive or negative with an explanation of such terms and the limits of accuracy of the test, eg:

"The specimen provided has been tested for urinary gonadotrophin and has been found to be:  
Positive / Negative  
Research has shown the results of the test to be accurate in 98 per cent of all cases.  
A positive result indicates a probable pregnancy."

At the request of the client, a copy of the form should be sent to her medical practitioner. Notwithstanding the result of the test, the client should be strongly advised to consult her medical practitioner or, if she appears reluctant to do so, another source of medical advice, eg, a pregnancy advisory bureau. The pharmacist should not recommend a particular pregnancy advisory bureau but have a list available for use if the patient requests the information.