

LABORATORY MONITORING PRIOR TO INITIATION OF HAART

Prior to initiation of HAART, it is useful to check haematologic and chemistry indices in order to screen for abnormalities and to establish baseline levels for future comparison. It is also helpful to check a baseline CD4+ T cell count and (where available) an HIV viral load, so that the immunologic (and virologic) response to HAART may be measured against pre-therapy baseline levels. However, if clinically indicated, HAART should not be delayed where resources are scarce or laboratory testing is not readily available to document baseline laboratory values. Pregnancy testing prior to initiation of HAART is *mandatory* for women of childbearing potential.