



## Rapid ART Initiation

February 2023

Figure 1: Protocol for Rapid ART Initiation

Identify Rapid ART Candidates	Assessment, Counseling, and Referrals	Baseline Lab Testing [a]	Payment Assistance?	Initiate ART	Follow-Up
<p>Candidates have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new reactive POC HIV test result, new HIV diagnosis, known or suspected acute HIV, or known HIV, <i>and</i></li> <li>No or limited prior ARV use (except PEP/PrEP), <i>and</i></li> <li>No known medical conditions or OIs that require deferral of ART initiation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess health literacy</li> <li>Discuss HIV diagnosis and disclosure</li> <li>Discuss ART benefits, adherence, adverse effects, and management</li> <li>Identify and address medical and psychosocial barriers to treatment and adherence</li> <li>Refer for substance use treatment, behavioral health services, and housing assistance, as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HIV Ag/Ab test</li> <li>Viral load</li> <li>Resistance testing</li> <li>CD4 count</li> <li>HAV, HBV, and HCV testing</li> <li>Metabolic panel</li> <li>STI testing (including syphilis)</li> <li>Urinalysis</li> <li>Pregnancy test for individuals of childbearing potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess need for payment assistance</li> <li>Refer patients with no insurance to NYSDOH UCP (or locally appropriate service)</li> <li>Provide resources for payment assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose among preferred regimens based on patient characteristics and preference</li> <li>Initiate ART immediately—preferably on the same day—or within 72 hours</li> <li>Administer the first dose on-site if possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact the patient within 24 to 48 hours by phone (or other preferred method)</li> <li>Assess medication tolerance and adherence</li> <li>If feasible, schedule in-person visit with medical care provider within 7 days</li> <li>Reinforce adherence</li> <li>Change or adjust the initial ART regimen as needed based on results of initial lab and/or resistance testing</li> </ul>

**Abbreviations:** Ag/Ab, antigen/antibody; ART, antiretroviral therapy; ARV, antiretroviral medication; HAV, hepatitis A virus; HBV, hepatitis B virus; HCV, hepatitis C virus; NYSDOH UCP, New York State Department of Health Uninsured Care Programs; OI, opportunistic infection; PEP, post-exposure prophylaxis; POC, point-of-care; PrEP, pre-exposure prophylaxis; STI, sexually transmitted infection.

**Note:**

- ART can be started while awaiting laboratory test results.