

Get Tested for HIV

GET TESTED

What's an HIV test?

It's a test that tells you if you have HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. People with HIV may have it for many years without knowing they are infected because they might not have symptoms. New drugs can help people with HIV stay healthy longer, but there is still no vaccine or cure for HIV. Getting tested for HIV is the only way to know for sure if you have the virus.

There are three good reasons to get an HIV Test:

- If you are infected, you can get treatment that may help you live a longer, healthier life;
- If you are not infected, you can learn how to stay that way; and
- The sooner you know your status, the better you will be able to protect yourself and others.

Who Should Get Tested?

You should get tested if you've ever:

- Shared needles or works to shoot drugs (even insulin or steroids);
- Shared needles for piercing or tattooing;
- Had sex (oral, vaginal, or anal) without using a latex condom; or
- Had a sexually transmitted disease (STD), including HIV, gonorrhea, herpes, syphilis, or chlamydia.

You should get tested if you are pregnant

- Or are planning to get pregnant. A pregnant woman with HIV can pass HIV to her baby during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding. There is medicine that can reduce the chance that a woman with HIV will pass it on to her baby.

How do you get tested? It's EASY:

- You can get a blood test, or at some places, an oral HIV test or Rapid Test;
- There are LOTS OF PLACES to get tested. Most clinics, local health departments and doctors test for HIV; and
- Some places give the test for FREE.

What do the test results mean?

A negative result means no antibodies were found in your body. If you are negative, testing counselors can talk to you about ways to reduce your risk for contracting HIV in the future.

- You still could be infected if you have been exposed to HIV in the last six months. Your body may not have made enough HIV antibodies to show up yet. Consider getting retested in a few months.
- You're not immune. You still can become infected.

A positive result means your body is making HIV antibodies – you have HIV. This doesn't mean you have AIDS or will get sick. If you are positive, you deserve to know. Detection and treatment of HIV can help you live a longer, healthier life. So the sooner you get tested, the sooner you can start taking care of yourself.

Who sees the results?

- You and your doctor or health care provider.
- The results are **CONFIDENTIAL**.

You can help stop the spread of HIV by getting tested and by:

- Not sharing needles, syringes, cookers, or other injection equipment;
- Not having sex. If you do have sex (oral, vaginal, or anal), use a latex condom and water-based lubricant every time, especially if you are not sure whether your partner has HIV or if one of you does have HIV;

- Ask about the sexual history of your sex partner(s) – do they have HIV, and/or another sexually transmitted disease (STD);
- Coming up with a plan to let your past and present sex and needle-sharing partners and spouse know they are at risk so they can get tested. A Health Department counselor can help you with this plan;
- Informing partners of your HIV status; and
- Encouraging friends, family and loved ones to learn more about getting tested for HIV.

[Where to get tested – click here.](#)

For additional information, contact:

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