



**KNOW YOUR STATUS.  
GET TESTED.**

# FACTS ABOUT HIV

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## What is HIV?

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS.
- HIV can weaken the immune system. Eventually a person with HIV can get serious infections or cancers—this is called AIDS.
- Even people without symptoms suffer ongoing damage to their immune systems and can pass the virus to others.
- Everyone should know their HIV status and be tested at least once for HIV. People infected with HIV may have no symptoms for many years.

## Testing Information

### Should I get an HIV Test?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all adults should be tested for HIV as part of their routine medical care. HIV is a chronic disease and as with many other diseases, it is better to diagnose and treat HIV early, rather than late. Today, we are fortunate to have effective treatment for people infected with HIV. Early treatment will help HIV infected people live longer and lower the chance of transmitting the virus to others.

## Who is at risk of being infected with HIV?

- Anyone who has had unprotected sex (anal, oral or vaginal), particularly with:
  - Anyone who is (knowingly or unknowingly) infected with HIV
  - A man who has sex with other men
  - Someone who injects drugs
- Anyone who has shared needles or equipment used to inject drugs or steroids or for tattooing or piercing
- Anyone who has a sexually transmitted infection (STI), such as Syphilis, Gonorrhea, or Chlamydia
- Anyone (male or female) who is a victim of intimate partner violence, sexual assault or trauma

## There are two types of HIV Tests:

- **Traditional Blood Test**

Blood is taken from the arm. Results can take up to 2 weeks.

- **Rapid Tests**

Rapid tests use blood from a finger-stick or fluid from the mouth to look for antibodies to HIV. Results are available in 20 minutes. A negative result does not need to be confirmed. A positive rapid test result must be confirmed with a follow-up test, using the traditional blood test. Results may take 1-2 weeks.

There are now Rapid-Rapid tests available, which require the same finger-stick as a Rapid test, but results are available in 60 seconds. A negative test does not need to be confirmed. A positive Rapid-Rapid test must be confirmed with a follow-up test.

## What do the HIV test results mean?

### Positive

This means you have HIV infection and can pass it to others.

### Negative

This means either you do not have HIV or you got it so recently that your body has not had time to make enough antibodies to be detected. If you could have been exposed to HIV recently, your provider may recommend that you repeat the test in 3-6 months.



## Reduce the risk of HIV infection

These are some ways to reduce your risk of becoming infected:

- Know your HIV status, and your partner's
- Use a condom every time you have sex
- If you are pregnant or considering pregnancy and have an HIV-positive partner, talk with your provider
- Use PrEP (medicine to prevent HIV infection) if you are at risk
- Get tested for HIV regularly, and ask your partner(s) to get tested regularly, so that you both know your current status
- Don't inject illicit drugs (those not prescribed by your doctor)
- If you do inject drugs, never share needles, syringes, or other equipment

Talk to your provider about PrEP and other prevention methods to reduce the risk of infection.

**Take the Test**  
**Take CONTROL!**