

I'm worried about HIV and AIDS

Why am I so scared of HIV?

Video of Why am I so scared of HIV?

FAST FACTS

- There are only a few ways you can get HIV. Know the facts and be aware of the risks so you can protect yourself and others.
- Testing is the only way to know for sure whether or not you have HIV. Whatever the result, you can get on with your life.
- Antiretroviral treatment (ART) means that people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives. The sooner you get on the right treatment, the better your long-term health will be.

Are you worried [about HIV and AIDS](#)? We can help by talking you through some of the most common things people are concerned about when it comes to HIV.

1. I'm worried about getting HIV

You've probably heard a lot about how the virus is transmitted. However, there are only a few [ways you can get HIV](#).

Unfortunately, there are a lot of [myths](#) about how HIV is passed on, which can get in the way of the facts and confuse people.

Instead of worrying about HIV, learn how it's [transmitted](#) and what you can do to protect yourself.

2. I'm worried about testing for HIV

It's normal to worry about testing for HIV and [what your result will be](#), but testing is the only way to know for sure if you have the virus.

If you think you've put yourself at risk, or you're at risk because of your situation, then get tested. It's never a bad idea to test, even if it's just to stop you from worrying.

People often don't test for HIV or put off testing because they're worried about what it means to be positive, what the test involves, or what other people will think. So remember:

- HIV tests are quick and simple.
- [Testing](#) puts you in control of your sexual health.
- If you're positive, you can start taking [treatment](#) and go on to live a long, healthy life.

3. I'm worried about what the test involves

There's no reason to be worried. The test is quick, painless and confidential, and uses just a tiny sample of your blood or a swab taken from your mouth.

Remember the tester is there to help you – they do this all the time. You can ask them any questions about what to expect. You can also take a look at our [HIV testing section](#) which guides you through everything you need to know about getting tested.

4. I'm worried about the test result

If you test negative, you can stop worrying! For a lot of people testing negative encourages them to take more [responsibility for their sexual health](#) as well as their partner's health.

If you test positive, it's better to know as early as possible so that you can get the right treatment and support. Taking antiretroviral treatment means you can live a healthy life, enjoy sexual relationships, and have HIV-negative children if you want to.

5. I'm worried about what other people will think

A lot of people worry about what it would mean for their future if they tested positive – and what other people would think. Just the thought of going to a clinic, or someone seeing them go into the clinic, stops some people from testing. It's important not to let fear get in the way of your health.

Sometimes other people's negative attitudes towards HIV and other STIs can put people off getting tested. People often have these views simply because they don't understand the facts. If you know the facts about [living with HIV](#), you'll feel more confident about ignoring or challenging people who talk negatively about HIV.

Remember, HIV is treatable but only if you know you've got it – and the only way to know is to get tested. Testing regularly puts your mind at rest, and keeps you in control of your sexual health.

If you test negative, continue to focus on staying negative, and protect yourself and your partners from HIV and other STIs. If you test positive, you can take treatment to stay healthy. Being on effective treatment also reduces the risk of passing HIV on to your partners.

The most difficult situation is not knowing. If you're HIV positive and unaware it means that you're not getting the treatment and support you need to stay well.

Even if you don't have symptoms, your immune system will be deteriorating and eventually you'll get sick – so why take the risk?

Testing positive for HIV was not the end, but only the beginning of a bigger journey and chapter of my life.

- James (from his [HIV testing personal story](#))

Forget about what other people think, your health is more important. Put your health first and get tested for HIV. Once you've done it you'll be informed and in control.

HELP US HELP OTHERS

Avert.org is helping to prevent the spread of HIV and improve sexual health by giving people trusted, up-to date information.

We provide all this for FREE, but it takes time and money to keep Avert.org going.

Can you support us and protect our future?

Every contribution helps, no matter how small.

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Last full review:

03 July 2020

Next full review:

03 July 2023



Sources:

Planned Parenthood (2019) 'Should I get tested for HIV?' (accessed July 2020)

The Well Project (2019) 'HIV testing' (accessed July 2020)