

HIV Testing

A QUICK GUIDE TO THE FACTS ON HIV TESTING.

Testing is the only way to
know if you have HIV.

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Why test for HIV?



Testing is the only way to know for
sure if you have HIV.



Knowing your status means you
can keep yourself and your sexual
partners healthy.



Being diagnosed early gives you a
better chance of living a long and
healthy life.



It's quick, easy and almost always free.

When should I test for HIV?

Take a test if you are...



not always
using
condoms



pregnant



sharing needles
or syringes
when injecting
drugs



breastfeeding

Even if you haven't recently put yourself at risk
of infection, getting an HIV test at least once
a year is a good habit to get into to check your
sexual health if you are sexually active.

Where to get an HIV test?

HIV testing is available at many healthcare clinics,
hospitals, sexual health clinics, and community
services.

Free HIV testing is widely available in many countries.
Otherwise the cost of an HIV test depends on your
clinic and location.






Search online for **HIV testing**
plus your location, to find
the nearest place to get
an HIV test in your area.



In some places self-testing kits may also be
available so you can test in the privacy of your
home if you prefer. It's still always best to talk
to a health worker once you have your result.

Know your rights

HIV testing should...

-  involve your full consent
-  be confidential
-  give you an opportunity
to speak to a professional
about what's involved
-  give you a positive or
negative result
-  depending on your results,
give you information
on further treatment or
prevention services.



How does HIV testing work?

You can test for HIV at any time, but it can take 2 weeks to 3 months after exposure for HIV tests to detect an infection (called the 'window period').

Your healthcare worker will be able to suggest the type of HIV test that's best for you.

Your healthcare worker will take either...



a blood sample



an oral fluid sample

Even though oral HIV tests can detect an infection, there is not enough of the virus present in saliva to be infectious.

Getting your results

The time between testing and getting the results depends on the type of test you have.



Rapid test and self-testing kit results are ready in 30 minutes or less



Laboratory test results can take a few days to a few weeks to return results

Modern HIV tests are very accurate, but positive results require a second blood sample to confirm an HIV infection.

What happens next?



RECEIVING A POSITIVE RESULT

This means that HIV has been detected in your body – but don't worry, there is treatment for HIV that will keep you healthy. Your test results are only shared with health workers involved in your care. They should advise you on...



referral onto a treatment plan



if pregnant, starting you on treatment to prevent transmission to your baby



where to get information and support for living with HIV



taking precautions if living or travelling in places with a high tuberculosis (TB) prevalence

Starting treatment straight away can ensure that you remain healthy and reduces your chances of passing HIV onto others.



RECEIVING A NEGATIVE RESULT

This means that you don't have HIV, but remember to get the facts on staying negative.



Protect yourself during sex by using condoms.



Find out about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) as an option to protect against HIV.



If you inject drugs, do it safely – don't share needles or syringes.



Have regular tests for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI).



If you've taken an HIV test within the window period since exposure, test again after 3 months.

If you've had unprotected sex or shared needles or syringes to inject drugs since your last HIV test, test again!

Need more information? Visit [avert.org/hiv-testing](https://www.avert.org/hiv-testing)