



ALL ABOUT HIV /AIDS

What is HIV ?

HIV testing tells you whether or not you have HIV. Knowing your status is important because it helps you make decisions to stay healthy and prevent getting or transmitting HIV.

Can you get tested for HIV?

Most HIV tests use a blood sample, either from a blood draw or a finger prick, but some use oral fluid or urine. Tests that use blood are even more accurate than other tests. Some test results are ready within 20 minutes, but others take a few days, depending on the type of test.

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- A pregnant woman not treated with the proper drugs, has a 20-45% chance that her infant will contract the virus from pregnancy.
- 59% of HIV-positive people in Africa are women, the majority of children diagnosed with HIV get the virus from their mothers.

DID YOU
KNOW ?

HIV can only be passed from person to person by exchanging bodily fluids. This most frequently happens during sex or when sharing needles.

What can you do if you are HIV positive?

It is essential to know your HIV status, especially if you are sexually active. It is advisable to test once every year.

- Sexually active gay and bisexual men may benefit from more frequent testing (every 3 to 6 months).

Before having sex for the first time with a new partner, you and your partner should talk about your sexual and drug-use history, tell each other and then consider getting tested for HIV.

Are You at risk to **HIV/AIDS**?

Consult your health-care provider so they can advise you on the window period for the test you're taking. If you're using a self-test, read the test's package to understand your test result. If you get an HIV test within 3 months after a potential HIV exposure and the result is negative. However, do get tested again.

If you think you've recently been exposed to HIV during sex (e.g. if the condom breaks or comes off) or through sharing needles, syringes or other injection equipment (for example, cookers), seek medical advice or see your doctor right away so they can let you know about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP.) Remember to start PEP within 72 hours (3 days) of a possible exposure, but the sooner you start PEP, the better. Also, anyone who has been sexually assaulted should get an HIV test as soon as possible. (After reporting the assault.)

Which HIV test to do and why?

An antigen/antibody test looks for both HIV antibodies and antigens. Most laboratory tests are antigen/antibody tests. Antigens are foreign substances that cause your immune system to activate. The antigen is part of the virus itself and is present during the early stage of HIV infection (called acute infection). If you have HIV, an antigen called p24 is produced even before antibodies develop. A rapid antigen/antibody test is available.

Nucleic acid tests (NAT) look for HIV in the blood. The NAT can give either a positive/negative result or the actual amount of virus present in the blood (known as a viral load test). This test is very expensive and not routinely used for screening individuals unless they recently had a high-risk exposure or they had a possible exposure and have early symptoms of HIV infection.

References

1. Hazuda DJ, Felock P, Witmer M, et al. Inhibitors of strand transfer that prevent integration and inhibit HIV Risk Reduction Tool | CDC 2. HIV testing: HIV Testing | Let's Stop HIV Together | CDC 3. HIV Prevention | Let's Stop HIV Together | CDC 4. HIV Risk Reduction Tool | CDC

