

Where Can I Find More Information?

Further information concerning HIV testing and other related issues is available where this brochure is distributed, and through other health professionals.

Your local health department or HIV testing provider is a helpful resource to answer your questions or direct you to additional resources.

Additional information may be accessed by calling the CDC information line at 1-800-232-4636.

Informative websites:

aids.gov
cdc.gov/hiv/
stophiviowa.org
cdc.gov/actagainstaids/



HIV Testing Is Your Key To

**Iowa Department of Public Health
Bureau of HIV, STD, and Hepatitis**

**Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319**

**515-281-6801
www.idph.iowa.gov**

awareness

reassurance

health

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B e c o m e A w a r e



What is HIV?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. Over time, most people infected with HIV become less able to fight off life-threatening infections and cancers. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is the late stage of HIV disease.

HIV is found in blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk of an infected person. Having sex without a condom or sharing needles or other equipment used to inject drugs can place one at higher risk for being infected with HIV.

HIV is NOT spread by casual contact like sneezing, coughing, eating or drinking from shared utensils, shaking hands, or hugging. Saliva is not one of the four fluids through which HIV is transmitted. In addition, insects do not transmit HIV.

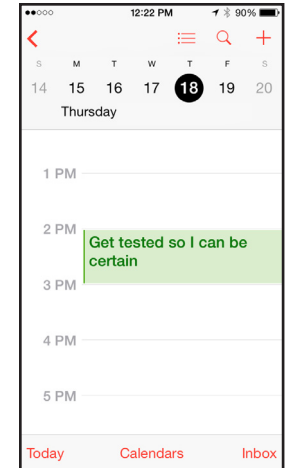
Someone with HIV can transmit the virus even before that person knows that s/he is infected (i.e., before symptoms are present).

What is an HIV Test?

An HIV test tells you if you have HIV. The body produces antibodies to fight germs. People who are infected with HIV have antibodies to HIV in their body fluids and these antibodies can be detected by a blood or an oral fluid test. Other tests may be used to confirm a diagnosis of HIV infection to give a greater than 99.9% accuracy.

Why Get Tested?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 1 in 6 people infected with HIV doesn't know s/he is infected. People who are not yet diagnosed can pass the virus to others without knowing it. Getting tested is the only way to know if you have HIV. For someone who has HIV, finding out is a necessary step to getting treatment to live a longer, healthier life. In addition, becoming aware of one's HIV infection allows a person to take precautions to avoid transmitting the virus to others.



Are HIV Test Results Kept Confidential?

Results from a confidential HIV test become part of a private medical record. If the test result is positive, public health law requires the medical provider who performed the test to report it to the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Reporting allows the Department of Public Health to offer referrals to physicians, partner services, and other essential health and supportive services to newly diagnosed people. Reporting also helps the Department of Public Health to monitor the HIV epidemic and to create programs for HIV prevention and medical care that best serve the needs of infected persons and affected communities. The Department is required by law (Iowa Code 141A) to keep information about you confidential.

Gain Assurance



Who Should Be Tested?

The CDC recommends that everyone between the ages of 13-64 be tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care. A person should also be tested if s/he has:

- had sex (vaginal, anal, oral) without a condom with someone whose HIV status is unknown or with someone who has HIV.
- shared needles or other equipment used to inject drugs with someone whose HIV status is unknown or with someone who has HIV.
- been told they have a sexually transmitted disease (STD) or infection other than HIV.

A person of any age, gender, race, ethnic group, religion, economic background, or sexual orientation can get HIV.



HIV Testing for Pregnant Women

A woman with HIV can pass the virus to her baby during pregnancy, birth, and breastfeeding. Women who are pregnant should talk to their doctors about being tested as early in the pregnancy as possible. If a woman tests positive for HIV, medication can be used to substantially lower her chance of passing HIV to the baby.

What Does a Negative Test Result Mean?

An HIV-negative test result means that no HIV antibodies were found at this time. This usually means you are not infected with HIV, provided that it has been at least one month since your last exposure. Most people who are infected with HIV will test positive within one month of being infected, and virtually all infections can be detected within three months. This period of time, commonly referred to as the “window period,” is when infection has occurred but an HIV antibody test is still unable to detect it. During the window period, a person with HIV infection can pass the virus to others, even though his or her antibody test is negative.

Staying Negative

To reduce your likelihood of becoming infected with HIV:

- Choose less risky sexual behaviors like mutual masturbation or use of a condom when your partner’s HIV status is positive or unknown, or when your partner has not been tested recently.
- Use condoms consistently and correctly to avoid exchange of body fluids during sex.
- Reduce the number of people you have sex with.
- Get tested and treated for other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and encourage your partners to do the same.
- Avoid using or sharing needles.
- If your partner is HIV-positive, encourage your partner to get and stay on treatment.



Taking Medicine to Prevent HIV

Today, more tools than ever are available to prevent HIV. In addition to limiting your number of sexual partners, never sharing needles, and using condoms correctly and consistently, you may be able to take advantage of newer biomedical options such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). The word “prophylaxis” means to prevent or control the spread of an infection or disease.

PrEP

If you are at substantial risk for acquiring HIV, talk to your doctor about PrEP. The goal of PrEP is to prevent HIV infection from taking hold if you are exposed to the virus. This is done by taking one pill every day. These are some of the same medicines used to keep the virus under control in people who are already living with HIV. PrEP does NOT prevent other STDs (such as gonorrhea, chlamydia or syphilis), which you can also contract from condomless oral/anal/vaginal sex.



PEP

If you have a possible exposure to HIV (e.g., anal or vaginal sex with someone who is or may be HIV-positive), talk to your doctor right away (within 3 days) about PEP. PEP is the use of antiretroviral drugs after a single high-risk event to stop HIV from making copies of itself and spreading through your body. If you think you may have been exposed to HIV very recently, see a doctor as soon as possible to find out if PEP is right for you.



What Does a Positive Test Result Mean?

If the test is positive, this means that HIV antibodies are present and HIV infection has occurred. It is important to know that HIV doesn't have to shorten your life. Current treatment options and medications are available to help you manage HIV. These medications have an added benefit of reducing your chance of passing the virus on to others.

Support is available! Resources are provided to help you find a healthcare provider who specializes in HIV, to assist with the cost of medications, and to connect you with social support services. See the brochure *What To Do If You Are HIV Positive?* and the *HIV Services Directory* or contact the Iowa Department of Public Health at 515-281-6801.

