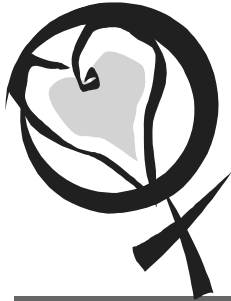


# Key Messages about the Importance of HIV Testing



There are many reasons to have an HIV test. HIV counseling & testing is an important part of good health care. The only way to know if you have HIV is to be tested. It is now possible to have an HIV test and receive your results before you leave today.

**“Getting my test results helped me put my mind at ease!”**

## Facts about HIV/AIDS

1. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. HIV can be passed by:
  - ✗ Unprotected sex (vaginal, anal or oral sex without a condom) with a person who has HIV
  - ✗ Shooting drugs with needles or works of a person who has HIV
  - ✗ A woman who has HIV can pass it to her baby during pregnancy, birth or through breastfeeding
2. There are treatments that help people living with HIV stay healthy. Getting tested early will help you get the most from your health care.
3. HIV testing is important for women before or during pregnancy. Treatment can reduce the chance that a woman with HIV will pass the virus to her infant.

**“ I tested positive, but the treatments are helping me stay healthy.”**

## More Facts....

4. Many resources are available in New York to help people living with HIV meet their medical, social and legal needs.
5. HIV testing is confidential. A doctor can share your HIV test results with other providers when the information is needed for your health care. The names of people who have HIV and other STDs, like syphilis and gonorrhea, are confidentially sent to the State Health Department. This helps the State Health Department plan services for people with HIV.
6. If your test result shows that you have HIV, your doctor will talk with you about the need to let your sex and needle-sharing partners know that they should get tested for HIV. Help is available. Counselors from Health Department programs called PNAP & CNAP can help notify partners without ever telling them your name.
7. Your HIV test is voluntary. Your provider will ask you to sign a consent form for HIV testing, which you should read carefully. He/She will also answer any questions you have about HIV testing.

# Options for HIV Testing

# Rapid Testing for HIV/AIDS

There are several different options for HIV testing. Not all testing sites offer every one of these options. Talk with your provider about the option that feels right for you.

## Anonymous or Confidential Testing:

- ✗ Anonymous testing The test is free & you do not give your name. Call 1-800-541-2437 to find out where.
- ✗ Confidential testing The HIV test result will be put in your confidential medical record. Most doctors and clinics do this kind of HIV test.



## Standard HIV Testing:

- ✗ Blood test - blood is drawn from a vein. If your provider is performing other blood tests it may be possible to draw the blood for all of the tests at once. You return in about two weeks to get the test result. If your test is negative, it means you are not infected with HIV. But, if you had a risk in the last 90 days you may need to be tested again. If the test is positive, it means you are infected with HIV.
- ✗ Oral fluid test - a special pad is used to get fluid from your mouth. You return in about two weeks to get the test result. If your test result is negative, it means you are not infected with HIV. But, if you had a risk in the last 90 days you may need to be tested again. If the test is positive, it means you are infected with HIV.

“...I like having choices”

## Rapid Testing:

The provider draws the sample (most often with a finger-stick) and the test is performed. The results are available on the same day. If the result is non-reactive or negative, it means you are not infected with HIV and no more testing is needed, unless you had a risk in the last 90 days. If the test is reactive, you may be infected & you will need a standard blood test or oral fluid test to tell for sure if you are infected. Your provider will ask about your risk behaviors & help you understand what your test result might mean. You will have to return for a second visit to get your final test result.

“ I was glad to get my result in the same day!”

## Re-Testing

### Re-testing Three Months After Your Last Risk of Getting HIV:

Some people who test negative with standard or rapid testing should be tested again. To know for sure that you are not infected, you should be tested three months after the last time you had unprotected sex or shared injection works with a person who might have HIV.

“I tested negative & now I know how to protect myself!”