



Could it be
acute HIV?

What is acute HIV infection?

Acute HIV infection is the very early stage of infection with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), the virus that causes AIDS. This is also called primary HIV infection. Acute HIV infection starts as soon as HIV enters the body and usually lasts for about 2 months, until your body starts to make HIV antibodies. Antibodies are tools that your body uses to fight HIV infection.

Within 2-4 weeks after you are infected with HIV, you may feel symptoms like a sore throat, swollen glands, fever, rash, and joint and muscle aches. These symptoms are a lot like having the flu or “mono” (mononucleosis). Because the symptoms go away and you feel better in a few weeks, you may not think it’s serious. But, if you had sex without a condom or if you shared drug injection equipment (drug works) any time in the past 2 months and you had flu-like symptoms, it could mean you are infected with HIV.

Flu-Like Symptoms

SORE THROAT, SWOLLEN GLANDS, FEVER, JOINT AND MUSCLE ACHES

PLUS

Exposure to HIV

SEX WITHOUT A CONDOM, SHARING DRUG INJECTION EQUIPMENT

MAY EQUAL

Acute HIV Infection?

GET TESTED TO KNOW FOR SURE.

The two main ways you are exposed to HIV are having sex without a condom and sharing drug works. These are also called **risk behaviors**.

A risk behavior is having sex without using a condom



A risk behavior is sharing drug works



It is important to know if you have acute HIV infection so you can:



See a doctor or healthcare provider and get medical care right away.



Avoid passing HIV to other people. During acute HIV infection, the amount of HIV in your body (viral load) is very high. If you know you have acute HIV infection, you can avoid infecting others by wearing a male or female condom and not sharing drug works.



Tell any of your sex partners or needle-sharing partners that they may have been exposed to HIV and they should get an HIV test. Or ask your doctor or healthcare provider for help in telling your partners.



Avoid passing HIV to your baby if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Is there a test for acute HIV infection?

Getting an HIV test is the only way to know if you are infected. But a regular HIV test looks only for antibodies. If you get a regular HIV antibody test during the period of acute HIV infection, it will not show that you have the virus. It cannot find the HIV virus until it has been in your body for a month or more. There are special viral tests that can find even small amounts of HIV in your body.

When you go for an HIV test:

- If you have flu-like symptoms and you had sex without a condom or shared drug works in the past month or so, get an HIV antibody test.
- If the HIV antibody test is negative, talk with your doctor or healthcare provider about any risk behaviors you have done in the past few weeks or months. These behaviors may have exposed you to HIV. Ask whether you need a special viral test.
- If you test negative for HIV, but you continue to do risk behaviors, get tested again 3 months later.



Where can you get tested?

The New York State Department of Health and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene do free, voluntary HIV testing. These are tests to find HIV antibodies. Many local departments of health, community clinics, hospitals, and doctors also do testing. You can do a blood test or a test that takes fluid from your mouth. Most testing sites offer a rapid HIV test. You get the results in about half an hour. To find places in New York City to get an HIV antibody test, call 311. You can also get an HIV antibody test at any of the 11 New York City STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) clinics.

To find HIV testing sites anywhere in New York State, call:

1-800-541-AIDS (2437) (English)

1-800-233-SIDA (7432) (Spanish)

What if I test positive for acute HIV infection?

If you test positive for HIV, the doctor or healthcare provider who did the test may send you to an HIV specialist. If you got your HIV test at a clinic, they can provide medical care or help you find the right services. HIV specialists can do more tests to find out how HIV is affecting your body. If you need to take anti-HIV medicines right away, they can get you started. The key is to get medical care soon and stay healthy.

Where to find help

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HIV/AIDS

New York State Department of Health HIV/AIDS Hotline
1-800-541-AIDS (2437) (English)
1-800-233-SIDA (7432) (Spanish)

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/aids/index.htm
TTY HIV/AIDS information line: 212-925-9560
Voice callers can use the New York Relay System:
711 or 1-800-421-1220;
ask the operator to dial 212-925-9560.

HIV COUNSELING AND TESTING

New York State Department of Health
Call the hotline number above for a list of HIV testing sites.

HIV COUNSELING HOTLINE

1-800-872-2777
Monday – Friday, 4 pm – 8 pm; weekends, 10 am - 6 pm.

CLEAN NEEDLES AND SYRINGES

New York State Department of Health
ESAP (Expanded Syringe Access Demonstration Program)
and SEPs (Syringe Exchange Programs)
1-800-541-AIDS (2437) (English)
1-800-233-SIDA (7432) (Spanish)

TELLING YOUR PARTNERS: PNAP AND CNAP

In New York State outside of New York City,
call PNAP (PartNer Notification Assistance Program):
1-800-541-AIDS

IN NEW YORK CITY, CALL CNAP

(CONTACT NOTIFICATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM)

1-212-693-1419 or call 311 and ask for CNAP.



State of New York
Eliot Spitzer, Governor

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