

HIV Testing: A User's Guide



Make HIV Testing a Regular Health Check

If you have sex or inject drugs, get tested at least once per year. Depending on your sex life, you may benefit from testing for HIV every three to six months.

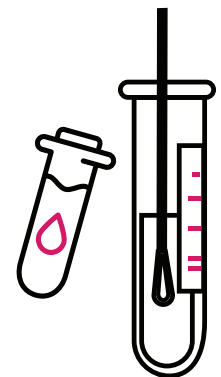
If you test positive for HIV, get started on HIV treatment right away. Safe and effective medicines help people with HIV live long and healthy lives. People who take HIV treatment and have an undetectable viral load cannot pass HIV to others through sex.

HIV testing is available at no or low cost in NYC.

- Ask your health care provider for an HIV test.
- Get tested at a Sexual Health Clinic. For locations, visit nyc.gov/health/sexualhealthclinics. Anyone age 12 or older can get an HIV test without their parent or guardian's permission at a Sexual Health Clinic.
- Search the NYC Health Map at nyc.gov/health/map or call **311** to find out where to get an HIV test or a free at-home HIV self-test kit.

Types of HIV Tests

- **Laboratory blood tests**, which are very accurate and provide results within a few days
- **Rapid tests**, which provide results in as little as 60 seconds (finger-stick test) or 20 minutes (swab test)
- **Oral swab tests**, which do not require a blood sample
- **Home self-test kits**, which allow you to test yourself in private using an oral swab



It takes time before an HIV test can detect a new HIV infection.

- HIV antigen/antibody laboratory blood tests will detect an HIV infection 18 to 45 days after exposure.
- Rapid finger-stick and oral swab tests can take longer, detecting HIV infections 23 to 90 days after exposure.
- Special viral load tests can detect a new HIV infection as soon as 10 days after exposure.

To be sure you do not have HIV, get a laboratory blood test **45 days** after your last possible exposure or a rapid test **90 days** after your last possible exposure.

Know the Signs of a New HIV Infection

Early signs of a new HIV infection include fever, swollen glands, or a rash.

- If you may have been exposed to HIV and have these symptoms, avoid having sex and go immediately to a clinic and get tested for HIV.
- Not everyone who gets HIV notices these symptoms.

Ways To Prevent HIV Transmission

Get tested regularly for HIV. If you have HIV, the sooner you get tested, the sooner you can start treatment so you can stay healthy and avoid passing HIV to others.

- **Get tested and treated for other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).** STIs do not always show symptoms and can make it easier to get or spread HIV.
 - **Use condoms.** Condoms help prevent HIV, other STIs, and pregnancy.
 - **Take PrEP to prevent HIV.** PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) is safe and effective medicine that prevents HIV. PrEP is available as a pill you take every day or an injection you receive every two months.
 - **Take emergency PEP if exposed to HIV.** The medicines in emergency PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) can prevent HIV after exposure if started within 72 hours. Start PEP right away by calling the 24/7 NYC PEP Hotline at 844-3-PEPNYC (844-373-7692).
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For more information and additional user's guides,
visit nyc.gov/health/hiv
or scan the QR code.

