

HIV · LEAFLET FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

HIV testing: what to expect

A calm, plain guide to how testing works, what happens on the day, and what your result means.

Know **Testing is the only way to know your HIV status.** Many people with HIV feel well and have no signs for years. Knowing early means you can start treatment and stay healthy.

Who should get tested?

- Anyone who has ever had sex without a condom
- Pregnant women, at every pregnancy
- Anyone with TB, or with TB signs
- Partners of people living with HIV
- People with a sexually transmitted infection
- Anyone who has shared needles or sharp tools

Your rights

- **It is your choice.** No one can test you without your agreement.
- **It is private.** Your result is shared only with you, unless you decide otherwise.
- **You will be respected.** You should never be judged or turned away.
- **You can ask questions** at any time, before or after the test.

ON THE DAY

What happens when you get tested

1 A short, private talk

A trained counsellor explains the test and answers your questions. You agree before anything happens.

2 A finger-prick test

A small drop of blood is taken from your finger. It is quick, with only a small pinch.

3 A short wait

Results from a rapid test are ready in about 15 to 20 minutes, on the same day.

4 Your result, in private

The counsellor tells you the result and what it means for you.

5 Next steps together

Whatever the result, you leave with clear advice and support.

6 Self-testing is also an option

Ask your health worker about HIV self-test kits you can use at home.

Ask **Where can I get tested?** At health facilities, antenatal clinics and community outreach. Your community health worker can refer you.

Understanding your result

IF YOUR RESULT IS

Negative

No HIV was found by the test.

- If you may have been exposed in the last few weeks, test again in 3 months, as very recent infections may not show yet.
- Use condoms every time to stay negative.
- If you are at high risk, ask about **PrEP**: a daily medicine that prevents HIV.
- Encourage your partner to test too.

IF YOUR RESULT IS

Positive

HIV was found. A second test will confirm it.

- HIV is a manageable condition. You can live a long, healthy life.
- You can start treatment (**ART**) straight away, often the same day.
- You will be linked to a clinic and a support person.
- You decide who to tell. Your counsellor can help you tell a partner.



Undetectable = Untransmittable

People on ART who keep an undetectable viral load do not pass HIV on to their sexual partners.

LIVING WELL WITH HIV

1

Take ART every day

At the same time each day.
Do not stop, even when you feel well.

2

Check your viral load

Regular tests show the treatment is working.

3

Get screened for TB

People living with HIV are at higher risk of TB.

Pregnant? Protect your baby

With treatment during pregnancy and breastfeeding, the chance of passing HIV to your baby becomes very low. Test early at your antenatal visit, and ask about testing your baby after birth.

Ways to prevent HIV

- Use condoms correctly, every time
- PrEP for people at high risk
- Never share needles, razors or sharp tools
- Get tested together with your partner

Myth: You can get HIV from hugging, sharing food or mosquito bites.

Fact: HIV does not spread through everyday contact. You can share a home, food and a hug.

Test

Know your status. Protect your future.

Speak to your community health worker or visit your nearest health facility.