



HIV Tests



HIV tests are an essential tool in the fight to prevent HIV, as they help individuals and partnering people to know their status and take appropriate actions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that **EVERYONE between the ages of 13 and 64 be screened for HIV** at least once as part of their routine health care. Sexually active gay and bisexual men benefit from testing every 3 to 6 months. More frequent testing is recommended for people with higher risks of infection such as having sex without condoms, having sex with multiple partners, or injecting drugs using shared needles.¹ Tests can also be ordered for concern about your own HIV status or ***uncertainty about the status of a sexual partner*** (even if you are in a monogamous relationship or had an unwanted sexual encounter).

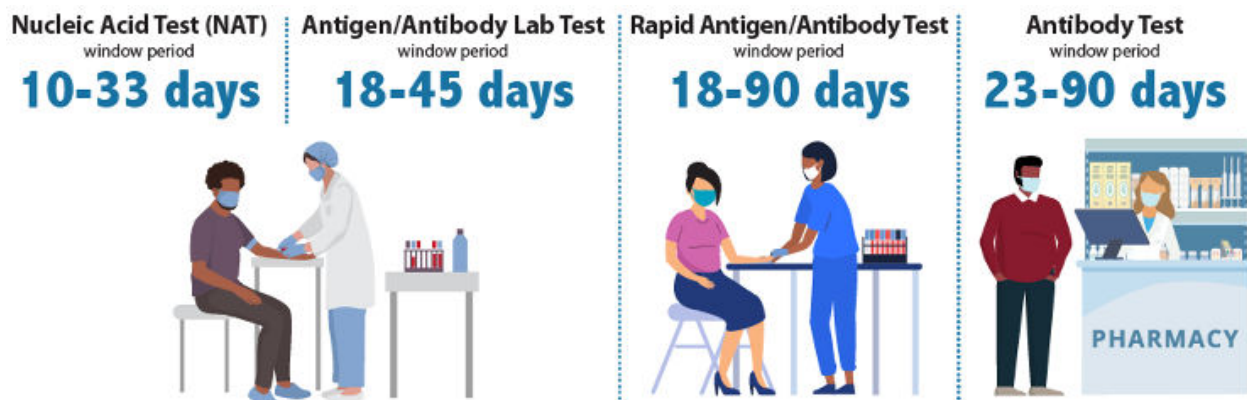
The CDC also recommends getting tested if:²

- You are a man who has sex with another man
- You have had sex with someone who has HIV
- You've had more than one partner since your last HIV test
- You have exchanged sex for drugs or money
- You have had another sexually transmitted disease, hepatitis, or tuberculosis
- You have had sex with anyone who has done anything listed above
- You are pregnant or planning to get pregnant - get tested as early as possible to protect yourself and your baby.³



There are various types of HIV tests available to help make informed choices regarding your health:

- 1. Nucleic Acid Tests (NATs):** These tests detect the presence of the virus itself in the blood. They are usually performed at a healthcare facility and can detect HIV infection earlier than antibody or antigen/antibody tests.⁴ (Can detect VERY EARLY INFECTION as early as 10 days after infection and usually detect 10 to 33 days after exposure)^{4,5}
- 2. Antigen/Antibody Tests:** These tests detect both HIV antibodies and antigens (the virus itself). They are usually performed at a healthcare facility and can detect HIV infection earlier than antibody tests.⁴ (Can detect VERY EARLY INFECTION and are recommended first line in the laboratory testing algorithm. Lab tests using blood from a vein can usually detect HIV 18 to 45 days after exposure)^{4,5}
- 3. Antibody Tests:** These tests detect the presence of HIV antibodies in the blood or oral fluid. They can be performed **at home with a self-test kit** or at a healthcare facility. Some popular self-test kits are OraQuick and INSTI.⁴ (Can **test 2 to 8 weeks** after exposure to the virus)⁴.
 - Oral fluid antibody tests: Can detect infection on month or more later than blood-based tests because of a lower concentration of HIV antibodies in oral fluid. It is not ideal for identifying infection but may be appealing when there is limited access to facility-based testing.
- 4. Home tests:** These can be purchased online, in a pharmacy, in stores, some health departments, or ordered by a provider and covered by most insurance plans or might be offered at a reduced cost or free.⁶ These tests allow people to take an HIV test and find out their result in their own home. They are also an emerging area of interest as they can be helpful at improving access and reaching individuals, couples, and consumers in sexual relationships.
 - a. Mail-in:** Consumers complete the tests at home and then mail the sample to the lab for testing. Individuals with positive results should reach out to medical providers to be linked with appropriate medical care quickly.¹ Mail-in HIV tests are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and require a blood stick.⁶
 - b. Rapid Self-Test:** An oral swab test that can be ready within 20 minutes.













Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. CDC Website. 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/hiv-testing/hiv-window-period.html>.

When choosing an HIV test, it's essential to consider factors such as the window period (the time between infection and when a test can detect the virus), accuracy, and convenience. If you are considering an HIV test, it's a good idea to consult with a healthcare professional to discuss your options and determine the best course of action. Early prevention, detection, and treatment of HIV can significantly improve health outcomes.

WHICH HIV SELF-TEST IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

HIV self-testing allows you to take an HIV test at home or other private location. There are two kinds of HIV self-tests: Rapid and Mail-In. Learn the differences and which may be right for you.

	Rapid self-test	Mail-in test*
 Can I order it myself?	✓	✓
 Can my health care provider order it for me?	✗	✓
 Is it available at a pharmacy?	✓	✗
 Can I order it online?	✓	✓
 Does it offer quick results?	✓	✗
 Can it find HIV soon after exposure?	○	✓
 Does it use an oral swab?	✓	✗
 Does it use a small blood spot from a finger stick?	✗	✓
 Is it covered by insurance?	○	○
 Can I use my Health Savings Account or Flexible Spending Account?	○	○

* Not approved by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration. However, labs are required to establish and verify the test's accuracy.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics



Yes



Sometimes



No

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. CDC Website. 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/hiv-testing/hiv-self-tests.html>.

If you still would like more information on where or how you can get tested, please visit: gettested.cdc.gov or call **1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)**²

References

1. U.S. Food and Drug Administration [FDA]. Facts about in-home HIV testing. FDA Website. <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/facts-about-home-hiv-testing>. Updated June 25, 2020. Accessed December 13, 2023.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. Getting tested. CDC Website. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/hiv-testing/getting-tested.html>. Reviewed July 22, 2022. Accessed December 22, 2023.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. HIV testing 101. CDC Website. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/consumer-info-sheets/cdc-hiv-consumer-info-sheet-hiv-testing-101.pdf>. Published October 21, 2022. Accessed December 13, 2023.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. Implementing HIV testing in nonclinical settings. CDC Website. https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/testing/CDC_HIV_Implementing_HIV_Testing_in_Nonclinical_Settings.pdf. Published March 2, 2016. Accessed December 13, 2023.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. Understanding the HIV window period. CDC Website. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/hiv-testing/hiv-window-period.html>. Reviewed June 22, 2022. Accessed December 13, 2023.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. HIV self-testing. CDC Website. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/hiv-testing/hiv-self-tests.html>. Reviewed June 22, 2022. Accessed December 13, 2023.