

# HIV Screening and Prevention



## Why HIV Testing Matters

Getting tested for HIV is an important step in taking care of your health. Knowing your HIV status helps you:

- Get treatment early if you are HIV-positive
- Access prevention options if you are HIV-negative
- Protect your health and reduce the chance of passing HIV to others

*HIV testing is a normal part of healthcare and should be offered in many settings.*

## What Does Status-Neutral HIV Testing Mean?

HIV testing is designed to support your health no matter what the result is.

Whether your test is negative or positive, you will be offered the next steps that are right for you, including prevention options or treatment and care.

This approach helps make HIV testing routine, supportive, and focused on your overall well-being.

## Who Should Get Tested?

HIV testing is recommended for everyone, no matter your age, gender, or background.

You should consider getting tested:

- At least once in your life
- More often if you have ongoing chances of exposure to HIV

A healthcare provider or community health worker can help you decide how often testing is right for you.

## Where Can You Get Tested?

HIV testing is offered in different ways around the world. Depending on where you live, you may be able to get tested:

- At a clinic, hospital, or doctor's office
- At community health programs or mobile testing sites
- Through local organizations or outreach services
- With an HIV self-test kit, available in some countries

If you are not sure where to go, ask a healthcare provider, pharmacist, or community organization.

## What Happens During an HIV Test

- A health worker will explain the test, how it is done, and ask for your permission before testing
- The test may use a small blood sample, a finger prick, or an oral swab
- Results may be available the same day or within a few days

*Your HIV test results are private and confidential.*

## If Your Test Is Negative

A negative result means HIV was not detected at the time of testing.



*There are different ways to help prevent HIV, including methods and medications called PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), which may be taken as pills or injections. Your healthcare team can help you decide which option is right for you.*

You may want to talk with a health provider about:

- Medicines that help prevent HIV, if available where you live
- Condoms and safer sex practices
- Harm-reduction services, where offered
- When to test again

Prevention options can differ by country or community, but support is available in many places.

## If Your Test Is Positive

A positive result means HIV was found. This can feel overwhelming, but effective treatment is available worldwide.

You will be supported to:

- Connect to HIV care services
- Start treatment that helps you stay healthy
- Get information and support for your well-being

People living with HIV who take treatment can live long, healthy lives.

## Self-Testing, Where Available

In some places, HIV self-testing kits are available for home use.

- These tests allow you to check your status privately
- If a self-test result is positive, it is important to contact a healthcare provider for confirmation and care

Ask a health worker if self-testing is available and appropriate for you.

## Know Your Comfort, Rights, and Privacy

No matter where you live, you have the right to:



Decide whether  
to be tested



Receive respectful,  
nonjudgmental care



Have your information  
kept private



Ask questions and  
receive clear answers

You can bring a trusted person with you for support if that helps you feel more comfortable.

## Testing and Prevention May Look Different Where You Live

HIV testing and prevention services are offered in different ways around the world. What matters most is that:

- Testing is available and confidential
- You receive clear information about your result
- You are supported in getting prevention or treatment that fits your needs

A healthcare provider, community health worker, or local organization can help you find services in your area.

## Trusted Resources for More Information

If you would like to learn more about HIV testing, prevention, and care, please contact:

### Global resources

- UNAIDS | [unaids.org](https://unaids.org)
- World Health Organization (WHO), HIV Information for the Public | [who.int](https://who.int)
- WHO HIV self-testing information | [who.int/tools/self-testing-implementation-toolkit-for-hiv-hcv-and-syphilis](https://who.int/tools/self-testing-implementation-toolkit-for-hiv-hcv-and-syphilis)

### Country-specific resources

- Your country's Ministry of Health or local health department
- Community health organizations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

### For people in the United States, available resources

- Click to find free, fast, and confidential testing services, plus information on sexual health and PrEP providers near you! Check out [GetTested.CDC.gov](https://gettested.cdc.gov) and [locator.hiv.gov](https://locator.hiv.gov)
- HIV Self-Testing Information | [cdc.gov/stophivtogether/hiv-testing/self-testing.html](https://cdc.gov/stophivtogether/hiv-testing/self-testing.html)

*Local clinics, community organizations, and public health agencies can also help you find services near you.*

## References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]. Preventing HIV with PrEP. CDC Website. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/prevention/prep.html>. Published January 18, 2024. Accessed December 10, 2025.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS]. Pre-exposure prophylaxis. HIV.gov Website. <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/hiv-prevention/using-hiv-medication-to-reduce-risk/pre-exposure-prophylaxis>. Published February 7, 2025. Accessed December 10, 2025.