

Your test results

What happens if you test positive?

If you test positive, you will have another test to make sure of the result.

Testing positive for HIV does not mean that you have AIDS. People who are HIV positive can stay healthy for many years and may not even need medication right away.

Your result is confidential but this does not mean that you should ignore it.

Your health worker will talk to you about what to expect and give advice on how to live a healthy life with HIV. Your health worker can also give you advice on living with HIV, for example by:

- Taking good care of your body: eating well, getting exercise and taking your medication
- Learning how to prevent other people from getting HIV from you.

Ask your health worker where you can meet other people who are HIV positive and the same age as you are.

What happens if you test negative?

If you test negative, you will still get information on HIV prevention. Your health worker will talk to you about living a healthy lifestyle and how to make a plan to stay safe and free from HIV.

- The safest choice is to abstain from having sex.
- If you are sexually active, you need to use a condom every time you have sex. You can get free condoms from any government clinic.

Go back for a second test if you are HIV negative

It can take six weeks for HIV to show up in a test, which means that even if you have HIV, you might test negative during the first six weeks. This six-week period is called the 'window period'.

If you could have been exposed to HIV during this time, you should return for another test six weeks after the first one. This test will confirm whether you are negative or not.



Points to remember about HCT

- HIV is mainly spread through sex. Having unprotected sex increases your risk of getting HIV.
- Females have a greater chance of getting HIV than males.
- Girls should delay the first time that they have sex.
- It is very risky for a girl to have sex with an older man, or with more than one partner in the same period.
- An HIV test will let you know whether you are HIV positive or HIV negative.
- Everyone should know their status.
- Everyone who is having sex should get tested for HIV every year:
 - If you are positive, you can look after yourself, get treatment and not spread HIV to others.
 - If you are negative, you can take steps to stay that way.
- People who are HIV positive can stay healthy for many years.
- Know your HIV status. Take the HIV test.

Ask for advice and help

You can get advice and help from the health worker at the clinic. You can also phone one of the helpline numbers here:

loveLife 0800 121 900 or sms 'plz cal me' to 083 323 1023
National AIDS helpline 0800 012 322

Integrated School Health Programme

HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT)



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HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT)


Why does everyone worry so much about HIV?

HIV is an epidemic. This means that many, many people are infected and are dying from AIDS. It is the one of the worst epidemics the world has ever known.

In 2011, 5.6 million people in South Africa were living with HIV. This means that South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV of all the countries in the world. One out of every ten people in South Africa has HIV.

HIV attacks people of all ages, rich and poor. We are all affected by the disease, whether we are infected or not. This is because it is not only a health problem but also has a big effect on society and our country.

Once you have HIV, you have it for life because there is no cure. It is also very difficult to stop because of the way that it spreads and because many people feel it is shameful and keep it secret. The best defence is to understand the disease, change our behaviour and live a healthy lifestyle.



HIV is mainly spread through sex. Anyone who has sex risks becoming infected with HIV.

HIV is mainly spread through sex

Women are at special risk of getting HIV.

- Women get infected more easily than men. This is because the vagina has a larger surface area for the infected body fluid to enter through than the penis does.
- Surveys in South Africa show us that many more young women have HIV than young men.
 - For every male aged 15-24 years with HIV, there are four females with the disease.
 - For every five pregnant women aged 15-24 years, one is HIV positive.

Having sex at a young age increases the chances of getting HIV. So delay having sex for as long as possible.

Having sex with someone who is older than you makes you vulnerable to HIV infection. Stick to a partner who is no more than five years older than you.

People who have sex with more than one partner at the same time have a greater chance of getting HIV than those who stick with one partner only.

The HIV test

Deciding to go for the test

An HIV test is not just for special cases. Everyone who is having sex should get tested every year.

It is especially important if

- you have had unprotected sex
- you have had a sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- you have had sex with more than one partner
- you do not know the HIV status of your partner
- you are not sure if your partner is faithful
- you have experienced sexual abuse.



Why you should know your status

You should know your status so that

1. If your test is positive you can look after yourself so you do not get sick.

When you first get HIV, there are no signs that it is in your body. You do not feel sick. Only after some time – it can be years – will you start to feel sick, and then if you do not get treated, you could die.

Because you do not feel sick at the early stages, the only way to find out if you have HIV in your body is to have a test.

If you are tested for HIV, you can take the right steps to make sure you stay healthy. You can live a long life with HIV in your body, but you need to get treatment and look after yourself properly.

2. If you are HIV positive you can also make sure you do not pass the disease on to others.

If you have HIV in your body and don't know about it, you can easily pass it on to others without knowing that you are doing it. If you have unprotected sex, you can give another person HIV.

3. If your test is negative you can take steps to stay that way.

South Africa has more people living with HIV than any other country in the world. All South Africans, together and as individuals, need to take action to stop new HIV infections. The first step is for everyone to know their status around HIV. This means knowing if you are HIV positive or HIV negative.



The HIV test

Getting tested for HIV means finding out if you have HIV in your body or not.

You can do the test at your clinic. Sometimes there are also special days in your community when the HIV test is available. The test is free and it only takes about one hour in total. The results are private and confidential. This means you decide who to tell about taking it.

If you do have HIV in your body, your result will be HIV positive. If you do not, your result will be HIV negative.

There are three parts to the test:

Pre-test counselling


This means that a health worker will talk to you about how the test is done, how you protect yourself from infection and what the test results mean. She will tell you that the results of the test are confidential (private).

Actual test for HIV

The test is a quick prick on one of your fingers. It is not painful and it only takes a few minutes. The blood from your finger is tested to see if you have HIV in your body.

Post-test counselling

After the test, you will have post-test counselling so that your health worker can explain what your test result means. Your health worker is there to provide you with support and help you take the next step to ensure you have a healthy future.



STOPPING HIV STARTS WITH YOU. KNOW YOUR STATUS. GO FOR A TEST!