

Let's talk about HIV

What is HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is a virus that attacks the immune system and makes fighting disease and infection more difficult.

Does HIV have a cure?

There is no cure for HIV but with proper treatment, HIV is manageable, and people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives.

How do you get HIV?

HIV can be transmitted through condom-less anal and vaginal sex and sharing injection drug use supplies with a person living with HIV. HIV transmission from mother to baby during and after pregnancy is less common due to available treatments.

Do bodily fluids transmit HIV?

HIV is transmitted by blood, semen, vaginal and rectal fluids, and breast milk. HIV is not transmitted through saliva, sweat, and tears.

How do you know if you have HIV?

The only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested. Routine testing is the best way to know your status.

How often should HIV testing be done?

Yearly HIV testing is recommended for everyone during routine health check-ups. If your provider does not mention HIV testing, you can ask to be tested.

Testing once every 3-6 months is recommended for men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, and people who participate in transactional sex work.



How do you get tested for HIV?

There are different types of HIV tests that can be used. Here's a breakdown.

Antibody testing - Known as rapid testing, this detects the body's reaction to the virus through HIV antibodies. Antibody testing can be done with a small blood sample from a fingerstick; results are ready in less than 20 minutes. The oral swab uses oral fluid from your gums; results are ready in 20 minutes.

Antibody testing needs confirmatory testing.

4th Generation testing - Known as confirmatory testing, this test detects HIV antibodies and antigens, that activates your immune response. This is done through a blood draw, and results are ready in a few days.

When should you test for HIV?

No test will detect HIV immediately after exposure and testing should be done after your window period.

- A window period is the time between a possible HIV exposure and HIV detection.
- The window period for antibody testing is 90 days and 4th generation testing is 30 days.

Due to an unknown HIV status during this time, it is important to use HIV prevention methods to reduce the possible spread of HIV.

What to do if your HIV test is positive?

A positive HIV test means HIV has been found in your body and treatment will be needed.

- » Talk to someone you trust that can be by your side during this time.
- » Find a healthcare provider that offers HIV medical care to start treatment as soon as possible.
- » Taking HIV medication will it easier to manage living with HIV

What is U=U?

HIV medication will reduce the amount of HIV in the blood, so that it reaches an "undetectable" level. At this level HIV cannot be transmitted through sex.

Undetectable=Untransmittable

This is the goal for anyone that tests positive for HIV.