

# Answers to Common Questions About HIV Testing

HIV.gov encourages you to learn more about HIV testing and make a plan to know your status—then you can encourage others to do the same.

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Each June 27 is National HIV Testing Day, which recognizes the importance of getting tested for HIV and getting linked to the HIV prevention or treatment that is right for you. When you know your HIV status, you can take charge of your health with powerful treatment or prevention options. National HIV Testing Day is a great time to get answers to any questions you have about testing. Here are answers to common questions about HIV testing:

## Why is HIV testing important and why do we observe National HIV Testing Day?

About 1 in 8 people in the United States who have HIV don't know they have it. That's why everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 should get an HIV test at least once as part of their routine health care. [People with certain risk factors](#) should get tested at least once a year.

National HIV Testing Day encourages you to know your HIV status. That's powerful information that helps you take steps to keep yourself and your partner(s) healthy. There are several benefits to knowing your HIV status:

- If your test result is positive, then you can take medicine to [treat HIV](#) to help you live a long, healthy life and prevent passing HIV to others.
- If your test result is negative, then you can talk to a health care provider about the [HIV prevention options](#) available to you.

## How do I find an HIV test?

You can get an HIV test in many places in your community. One easy way to find an HIV test is through HIV.gov's [HIV services locator](#). Type in your city and state or ZIP code, then select the first filter for "HIV Testing" and click either "DONE" or "SEARCH" to receive a list and map of the nearest places that offer HIV testing. You can also check out the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [GetTested](#) tool.

Did you know there's also an HIV self-test that can be done entirely at home or in a private location? You can request a free HIV self-test on the [Together TakeMeHome](#) website. Today, access to HIV testing is easier than ever.

## Will an HIV test be expensive?

Most HIV tests are available for free or at a reduced cost. HIV screening is covered by health insurance without a co-pay. This includes most Medicaid programs. If you don't have health insurance, then many community-based organizations, health centers, family planning clinics, pharmacies, and local health departments offer free or low-cost tests.

## What if I test positive for HIV?

If you test positive for HIV, then know that you are not alone and there are treatment options available. Upon testing positive, you will need to do an additional follow-up blood test to confirm your result. If that test is also positive, then you will be diagnosed with HIV and should talk with a health care provider about starting treatment. To learn more about the basics of treating HIV, visit our [HIV Treatment Overview](#) page.

## What if I test negative for HIV?

If you test negative for HIV, then you should still talk to a health care provider or check the information on your self-test package to find out whether you should get tested again. This is because of something called the "window period"—or the time between when you get HIV and when a test can detect it. If your second test is also negative, then you can be sure that you do not have HIV, but be sure to consider HIV prevention options like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) or using condoms every time you have sex. Learn more about the window period on our [HIV Testing Overview page](#). To learn more about HIV prevention, visit our [HIV Treatment as Prevention](#) and [Preventing Sexual Transmission of HIV](#) pages.

## Where can I learn more?

To learn more about HIV testing, talk to a health care provider and check out our [Learn About HIV](#)

[Testing](#) pages.

## Take Action on National HIV Testing Day

Now that your questions are answered, is an HIV test right for you? If so, make a plan today to get one. Also, consider sharing what you now know with others on National HIV Testing Day. Help them make a plan to know their HIV status. #NationalHIVTestingDay

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