

Say **yes** to the HIV test.



**YES**

We're **asking** everyone.  
It's the law.

## Key Facts to Know Before Getting an HIV Test:

- HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. It can be spread through unprotected sex (anal, vaginal, or oral sex) with someone who has HIV, through contact with HIV-infected blood by sharing needles (piercing, tattooing and drug equipment, including needles), or by HIV-infected pregnant women to their infants during pregnancy or delivery, or by breastfeeding.
- Treatment for HIV is very effective, easy to take and has few or no side effects.
- People with HIV/AIDS can use safe practices to protect others from becoming infected. Safe practices also protect people with HIV/AIDS from being infected with different strains of HIV.
- Testing is voluntary and can be done at a public testing center without giving your name (anonymous testing).
- By law, HIV test results and other related information are kept confidential (private).
- Discrimination based on a person's HIV status is illegal. People who are discriminated against can get help.
- Consent for HIV-related testing remains in effect until it is withdrawn verbally or in writing. If the consent was given for a specific period of time, the consent applies to that time period only. You may withdraw your consent at any time.

## HIV testing is especially important for pregnant women.

- An infected mother can pass HIV to her child during pregnancy, child birth, or through breastfeeding.
- It is much better to know your HIV status before or early in pregnancy so you can make important decisions about your own health and the health of your baby.
- If you are pregnant and have HIV, treatment is available for your own health and to prevent passing HIV to your baby. If you have HIV and do not get treatment, the chance of passing HIV to your baby is one in four. If you get treatment, your chance of passing HIV to your baby is much lower.
- If you are not tested during pregnancy, your provider will recommend testing when you are in labor. In all cases, your baby will be tested after birth. If your baby's test is positive, it means that you have HIV and your baby has been exposed to the virus.

## **If you test positive for HIV: Your tester will schedule, with your permission, a follow-up appointment with a health care provider.**

- If you test positive for HIV, every effort will be made to link you directly to primary care, prevention, support, and partner services.
- It is not enough for a tester to give you contact information for a Designated AIDS Center (DAC) or an HIV-experienced provider. They must actively link you to primary care.
- The health care professional who conducted the test must schedule, with your permission, a follow-up medical appointment for HIV care. The appointment is voluntary.
- The health care professional will explain that if a person with HIV appears to have fallen out of care, he or she may be contacted by the medical provider or health department staff to address barriers to entry into care and promote engagement in care.

## **Your health provider will talk with you about notifying your sex partners or needle-sharing partners.**

- Your partners need to know that they may have been exposed to HIV so they can get tested and treated (if they have HIV).
- If you are uncomfortable notifying your partners on your own, your health care provider can notify them (either with you or without you being present).
- Health Department counselors (Partner Services Specialists) can also help notify your partners without ever telling them your name.
- If your health care provider knows the name of your spouse or other partner, he or she must report the name to the Health Department.
- To ensure your safety, the Partner Services Specialist or your health care provider will ask you questions about the risk of domestic violence for each partner to be notified.
- If there is any risk, the Partner Services Specialist or your health care provider will not notify partners right away and will assist you in getting help.

## **If you test negative for HIV, the health provider giving you the negative test result will share the following important information with you:**

If you received a negative HIV antibody test result, this almost always means you are not infected with HIV. However, you should understand what an HIV test result means and that you may need to be re-tested.

## **Why you may need to be re-tested for HIV.**

The period between the time of exposure and the time that a test can detect HIV infection is called the “window period.” During this period, an infected person has HIV and can pass it to other people, even if his or her HIV test is negative. If you engaged in any risk behaviors for HIV during the month prior to your HIV test, you should speak to your provider about being re-tested.

## **You still have to protect yourself from HIV infection.**

Even though you tested negative for HIV, keep protecting yourself from HIV infection. Do not have unprotected sex or share needles, syringes, or other drug injection equipment with anyone who has HIV or whose HIV status you don't know. Do not share needles for ear piercing, body piercing, or tattooing. You could get HIV if someone with HIV used the needle before you.

## **If you have sex:**

Use a latex male condom or a female condom. Condoms work to prevent HIV if you use them the right way, every time you have sex. You can buy condoms at grocery stores, drugstores and online. In New York City, condoms are free at certain stores, businesses, community organizations and clinics. For a list of participating organizations, go to: <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/condoms/nyscondom.htm> or [www.nyc.gov/condoms](http://www.nyc.gov/condoms).

- **PrEP (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis)** is a daily pill that can prevent HIV infection. If you are at risk for HIV, taking PrEP as prescribed can greatly reduce your risk of HIV. Ask your provider if PrEP may be right for you.
- **PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis)** is an emergency medication that you begin taking within three days of being exposed to HIV. If you are HIV negative and think you were exposed to HIV through contact with someone who has or might have HIV, go immediately to an emergency room and ask for PEP.

## **If you shoot drugs:**

- Use new needles and equipment each time and don't share anything, including cotton or water.
- Do not share needles for ear piercing, body piercing or tattooing.
- Never buy needles on the street, even if they look new.
- **Expanded Syringe Access Program:** syringes are available at pharmacies and other providers: [www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needlessyringes/esap/provdirect.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needlessyringes/esap/provdirect.htm)
- **Syringe Exchange Programs provide needles and syringes free of charge:** [www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needlessyringes/docs/sep\\_hours\\_sites.pdf](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/consumers/prevention/needlessyringes/docs/sep_hours_sites.pdf)
- **BE SOBER** - If you are drunk or high, you are less likely to think about protecting yourself and others from HIV. Using any drug lowers your ability to make decisions about safer sex and using clean needles and works.

## **More Information and Help:**

### **New York State Department of Health Website:**

[health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/publications](http://health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/publications)

### **New York State HIV/AIDS Hotlines (Toll-Free):**

English: 1-800-541-AIDS

Spanish: 1-800-233-SIDA

TDD: 1-800-369-2437

Voice callers can use the New York Relay System 711 or 1-800-421-1220 and ask the operator to dial 1-800-541-2437

### **Free, Anonymous Testing:**

For HIV information, referrals or information on how to obtain a FREE HIV test without having to give your name and without waiting for an appointment, call the regional program closest to the county you live in:

Capital District Region Anonymous HIV Testing Program:  
1-800-962-5065

Western Region (Buffalo Area) Anonymous HIV Testing Program:  
1-800-962-5064

Lower Hudson Valley Region Anonymous HIV Testing Program:  
1-800-828-0064

Western Region (Rochester Area) Anonymous HIV Testing Program:  
1-800-962-5063

Long Island (Suffolk/Nassau) Region Anonymous HIV Testing Program:  
1-800-462-6786

Central New York Region Anonymous HIV Testing Program:  
1-800-562-9423

### **New York City:**

311 for Information on DOHMH STD Clinics

### **For Information about PEP or PrEP go to:**

[www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/prep](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/prep)

## **More Information and Help:**

### **New York City HIV/AIDS Hotline:**

1-800-TALK-HIV (825-5448)

### **National Centers for Disease Control STD Hotlines:**

English/Spanish 1-800-232-4636, TTY 1-888-232-6348

### **New York State HIV/AIDS Counseling Hotline:**

1-800-872-2777

### **New York State Partner Services:**

1-800-541-AIDS

### **New York City Contact Notification Assistance Program:**

1-212-693-1419

### **Confidentiality:**

New York State Confidentiality Hotline: 1-800-962-5065

Legal Action Center: 1-212-243-1313 or 1-800-223-4044

### **Expanded Syringe Access Program (ESAP):**

English: 1-800-541-2437

Spanish: 1-800-233-7432

### **Human Rights/Discrimination:**

New York State Division of Human Rights: 1-718-741-8400

New York City Commission on Human Rights: 1-212-306-7500

**health.ny.gov/aids  
nyc.gov/health**

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