

FACTS ABOUT TESTING

1. Do I have HIV, or is it something else?

If you are infected with HIV, it usually takes three weeks to two months for your immune system to produce HIV antibodies. In the first months after being infected, you can test negative for HIV. If you think you were exposed to HIV and had a "close call," you should wait for two months before being tested. If you are infected, you can transmit HIV to others during the window period even if you test negative. In fact, during this period of early infection, you have the greatest chance of passing HIV infection to others.

If you have any unexplained symptoms, talk with your health care provider and consider testing for HIV.

2. How can I get tested?

Free or low-cost HIV testing is available in most communities. Find a testing location in your local area by calling the Ohio HIV/AIDS/STD Hotline at 800-332-2437.

3. What is an HIV test like?

The new style HIV tests can detect HIV in the fluid that comes from the inside of your cheek (not the same as saliva). A technician takes a swab of this fluid to do a rapid test (results available in about 20 minutes). A blood test is used to confirm positive results.

4. Am I going to die if my test result is positive?

If you get tested early and receive the right care for your HIV, you may be able to live a normal life. It can be very scary to learn that you are infected with a virus, particularly HIV. There is no cure for HIV, but there are treatments that help keep the disease under control and programs to pay for these treatments. Many people with HIV live long and healthy lives.

5. How can I stay HIV negative?

- **Practice safer sex:** Vaginal fluid, semen, and blood can all transmit HIV (and other infections), so it is important to use a barrier to protect yourself and others from these fluids. In addition, don't share personal items that may have blood on them, like toothbrushes, razors, piercing needles, home tattooing needles, etc.
- **Decrease risky behavior:** Surprisingly, alcohol is the drug most often associated with HIV infection because alcohol can impair your judgment. If you use drugs that are injected into the skin or a vein, don't share needles, since needles can transmit HIV and other infections.



Ohio Department of Health – HIV Care Services Section

246 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

TELEPHONE 614-466-6374 EMAIL hcs@odh.ohio.gov

www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/hastpac/hivcare/aids1.aspx