

HIV Testing



What does an HIV test actually test for?

HIV tests look for special things in your body called antibodies. These are like little soldiers that your body makes to fight against HIV. If the test finds these antibodies, it means you might have HIV. But don't worry, there's another test to make sure.

Can the HIV test be wrong??

Sometimes, the HIV test can say you have HIV when you really don't. This doesn't happen a lot, but it can if you're going to have a baby or if your liver isn't feeling well.

How do they do the HIV tests?

The test can be done in three ways: by taking a bit of blood from your arm, pricking your finger, or swabbing the inside of your mouth

Who should get tested and how often?

- Every single person who has sex should get tested at least once in their lifetime. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends all 13–64-year-olds are tested.
- Annual or more frequent HIV testing is recommended if you:
 - » have more than one sexual partner
 - » had condomless sex
 - » had any other sexually transmitted infection recently
 - » share syringes
- Quarterly (every 3 months) testing is recommended if you are taking PrEP.

I think I might have been exposed to HIV; how long should I wait to get tested?

- If your potential HIV exposure was less than 72 hours ago, you should immediately seek PEP.
- If your potential exposure was more than 72 hours ago, you should wait 2 weeks, then go get tested for HIV and other STIs.

Where can I get tested?

- Any MetroHealth medical provider can order an HIV test for you as part of your general medical care / check-up visit.
- There are free community testing sites in Greater Cleveland – you can search for free testing by visiting [gettested.cdc.gov](https://www.gettested.cdc.gov)

If I test positive, what happens next?

If you test positive for HIV you should get Rapid Start of HIV Treatment as soon as possible. Please call 216-778-4051. We provide adjustment counseling, education and link you to a Rapid Start visit the same day or next day.

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