

# Rapid Start



## What is Rapid Start?

Starting HIV treatment the same day you find out you have HIV (or as soon as possible after).

## Why is it important to start HIV medicine so quickly?

- Starting meds ASAP can help you live a long and healthy life.
- Rapid Start makes it more likely that you'll stay in touch with your healthcare team.
- Rapid Start helps the viral load (amount of HIV in your blood) go down as quickly as possible. Once your viral load is undetectable, U=U (undetectable = untransmittable) meaning you will not be able to pass HIV along during sex.

## What happens during a Rapid Start visit?

- You will get counseling and education from someone who is there to help you adjust to your new diagnosis. Even though people live long healthy lives with HIV, it is still a life-changing moment when the test comes back positive.
- You will talk with and be examined by a doctor.
- You will take your first dose of HIV medicine in the clinic and go home with a month supply.
- You will get a blood draw – we need many baseline labs.

## What happens after a Rapid Start visit?

- We will call to check on you in a few days.
- You will have a telehealth visit in 1 week. We will talk to you about the baseline lab results.
- You will come back to the clinic in 1 month.

## Can I get Rapid Start if I don't have health insurance?

Yes! Any person living in Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina, Lake, Geauga or Ashtabula Counties who meets certain income requirements can be eligible for the Ryan White Part A program, which can pay for outpatient medical care related to HIV. Our pharmacy can apply for programs on your behalf to make sure your medicine is either free or affordable for you.

## How do I schedule a Rapid Start visit?

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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