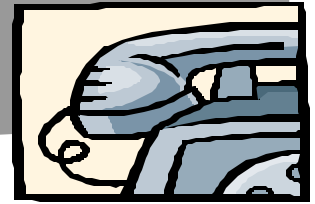


IT'S YOUR CHOICE!!



HIV TESTING

For more information about HIV/AIDS and sexual health call **CHOICE 215-985-3300**

What is an HIV test?

This test checks you for antibodies to HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), the virus that eventually causes AIDS. Usually, the test is done on a sample of your blood. There is also an oral test that examines tissue from your mouth and does not involve any needles.

Why should I be tested?

If you think you might be at risk for HIV — through unprotected sex or sharing needles — it is important to be tested. The earlier you know you are positive, the sooner you can begin to control the virus. With proper treatment, it is possible to live a long, healthy life with HIV. In addition, if you know your status, you can protect others from infection. If you test negative, the counselors at the testing site can tell you how to protect yourself and stay safe.

When should I be tested?

You can be tested for HIV at any time. However, the test is looking for antibodies which may take three to six months to develop in your body. This is called the “window period.” If you have been exposed to HIV recently, remember that your test may not be accurate until after those six months have passed. Also, someone who is HIV positive can transmit the virus during this window period, even though he/she may not test positive on the antibody test.

How accurate is the HIV test?

After the window period, both the blood and oral HIV tests are 99.7-99.9% accurate.

How much does an HIV test cost?

At many testing sites, an HIV test is free or very low-cost. The price may vary depending on where you choose to get tested.

What is the difference between anonymous and confidential testing? All HIV test results are protected by the law. If you choose **confidential testing**, a medical record will be created with your name but no one can see the results without your permission. If you choose **anonymous testing**, your name is never recorded at the test site. You are assigned a code and your results cannot be linked back to you, even by the people who work at the clinic.

How long do I have to wait for my results? Most HIV test results are available in 7-14 days.

What does HIV positive mean?

A positive test result means you have been infected with HIV. This does not mean you have AIDS or that you will get sick right away. With a good doctor and proper treatment, it is possible to stay healthy for a long time.

What does HIV negative mean?

A negative test result means you have not developed antibodies to HIV. Remember — it can take up to six months for your body to produce these antibodies. You might want to be re-tested in three to six months if there is a chance you were exposed to HIV in the recent past.

How can I be tested?

You can start by calling **CHOICE at 215-985-3300** for answers to questions about HIV/AIDS and the locations of testing sites close to you. The Hotline also has information about other sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, and pregnancy.

CHOICE
Educating the Community to Make Informed Decisions

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For more copies of this fact sheet, call 215-985-3355