



HIV Self-Testing

(HIVST) #test4HIV

This info-sheet is a compilation of information to provide more understanding on HIV self-testing.

It is important for everyone to know their health status. More so, if you are a sexually active gay man or a man who has sex with other men, then it is important that you know your HIV status.

Knowing your HIV status is very personal and it is important that you feel safe about who knows and how they got that information. If you want to be tested for HIV then self-testing may be a convenient and private way for you to have a test.



WHAT IS HIV SELF-TESTING?

HIV self-testing is a process, using a specimen collection kit, allows people to take an HIV test and know their results at home or at a private place.¹ In self-testing, a person collects his or her own specimen and interprets the result often in a private setting, either alone or with someone he or she trusts.² Self-tests are accurate. They are also easy for most people to perform and allow people to test when and where they want.³

REMEMBER

- HIV self-testing does not replace the HIV testing you get health facilities. This provides you additional choice in knowing your status;
- Self-testing should be done voluntarily, and you should not be forced to do this against your will. Seek help if you are being forced to self-test or have been threatened with violence.
- HIV tests should not be a requirement for employment or before you have sex.

WHEN DO I CONSIDER IF SELF-TESTING IS FOR ME?

HIV testing, including self-testing, should be made accessible for everyone. However, you may consider the points below to assess whether HIV self-testing is the best approach for you:

- Are you worried about confidentiality if you test for HIV in a public place?
Are you worried about the confidentiality of the results?
- Are you worried about seeing people you know at the testing center?
- Do you have limited time to visit a health clinic or laboratory for an HIV test?
Is it difficult to travel to the health clinic or laboratory?
- Is the total cost of your time, travel and the testing procedure too expensive?
- Do you want the test results quickly or perhaps you don't have the time to wait or return to the health clinic or laboratory for the results?
- Are you afraid of needles? Then you may consider self-testing.

Then you may
consider
self-testing



WHAT SHALL I DO IF MY SELF-TESTS SHOW THE FOLLOWING RESULTS?

- If your self-test is '**non-reactive**' (negative), this means that you do not have HIV. However, this does not mean that you are completely sure of being negative, depending on when last you had unprotected sex or used unclean injecting equipment. Continue to practice safer sex, and take another test in six months. and use HIVST at regular intervals as another screening and testing tool.
- If your self-test is '**reactive**' (positive), then see your health clinic or community testing site to confirm the results of the self-test. If the retesting confirms a 'reactive' result, you will be linked to a standard treatment and care. Starting treatment early can help protect your health and reduce the chances of passing HIV on to your partners.
- Sometimes the test result may give you a false result - false positive or false negative - if you remain concerned, consider getting a test at a testing site, clinic or community organization who offers HIV testing.
You do not have to wait for three or six months to have a second test.

WHERE CAN I GET HIV SELF-TESTING KITS?

- Sexual health clinics
- Pharmacies/drug stores
- Online ordering with delivery or pickup of test kits
- Selected community-based clinics / organizations
- Check out local supplier via social media
- Contact APCOM for advice and recommendations

Resources:

1. HIV testing. Self-testing. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. September 2020.
Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/testing/self-testing.html>
2. Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Testing Services. World Health Organization, 2019.
Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/336323/9789241550581-eng.pdf>
3. HIV Self-Testing: Key Questions, Answers and Messages for Community Organizations. World Health Organization, 2018.
Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/273771/WHO-CDS-HIV-18.23-eng.pdf?ua=1>

Other Resources:

Blued (gay social network) has a forum you can join - <https://www.blued.com/en>

Is the Philippines ready for HIV self-testing. Gohil, J., et al. (9 January 2020) BMC Public Health. DOI: 10.1186/s12889-019-8063-8
Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-019-8063-8#Abs1>

