

Where can you get an HIV test?

You can get tested at many public health clinics for little or no cost. You don't have to give your name and all information is confidential. In Texas, call **2-1-1** to find an HIV testing site near you. This is a free call.

Call these free numbers to get more information about HIV/AIDS:

For HIV/STD testing locations in Texas, call:
2-1-1

For other HIV/STD questions, call:
1 (800) CDC-INFO (English/Español)
1 (888) 232-6348 (TTY)

For more information, go to:
www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd



Texas Department of State Health Services
1100 W. 49th St.
Austin, TX 78756-3199
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HIV & AIDS

Facts You Should Know

Texas Department of State Health Services

Get the facts about HIV & AIDS:

- ✓ **HIV** is the virus that causes **AIDS**, a disease that destroys the body's ability to fight off infections.
- ✓ There is no cure for HIV or AIDS.
- ✓ AIDS can be fatal.
- ✓ People become infected with HIV because of what they do, not who they are.
- ✓ There are only a few ways you can become infected with HIV.
- ✓ You can protect yourself from becoming infected with HIV.
- ✓ A blood test can show if you have been infected with HIV. The test is confidential.
- ✓ If you are infected with HIV, there are things you can do to stay healthy.

What are HIV and AIDS?

HIV (or *Human Immunodeficiency Virus*) is the virus that causes **AIDS** (or *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*). HIV damages the immune system, the part of the body that fights infection. Eventually, the immune system becomes so weak that diseases and infections begin to attack the body. As these conditions worsen, a person is diagnosed with AIDS.

How can you tell if someone is infected with HIV?

You cannot tell if someone has HIV or AIDS by looking at them. A person infected with HIV may look healthy and feel fine, but they can still pass the virus to you. An HIV antibody test is the way a person can find out if he or she is infected with HIV.

Anyone can become infected with HIV. It has nothing to do with race, age, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation. People get infected with HIV because of what they do, not who they are.

How do you get infected with HIV?

- HIV is spread through **blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk**. Contact with these body fluids puts you at risk for HIV infection.
- The most common ways people are infected with HIV are:
 - **Having sex** (anal, vaginal or oral), with someone who is infected with HIV.
 - **Sharing needles** or syringes with someone who is infected. This includes sharing needles to shoot drugs or vitamins, to pierce body parts, or for tattoos.
- A woman with HIV can pass the virus to her baby during pregnancy or at birth. A few babies have also been infected by breast-feeding from their infected mother.
- Although all donated blood has been screened for HIV since 1985, some people got the virus by receiving HIV-infected blood products between 1978 and 1985. **You cannot get HIV by giving blood.**

How you won't get infected.

You **cannot** get HIV through the air or from casual contact. HIV is not spread by:

- Living, working, or going to school with someone with HIV infection
- Shaking hands, hugging, or kissing
- Sneezing or coughing
- Sharing food, plates, cups or forks
- Toilets, tubs, or swimming pools
- Mosquitoes or other insects

How can you avoid HIV infection?

- **Don't have sex.** This is the only sure way to avoid getting HIV through sex.
- **Don't share needles and syringes** to shoot drugs or for anything else.
- **Use a latex condom every time you have sex** unless you are sure your partner is not infected. When used correctly, condoms can help prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Stay with one partner** who has sex only with you. Use condoms unless you are sure your partner is not infected with HIV.

Should you get an HIV test?

You should think about getting tested for HIV if you have:

- Had multiple sex partners, male or female (the more partners you have, the greater your risk)
- Had sex without a condom (anal, vaginal, or oral) with a person whose HIV status you do not know
- Had sex with a prostitute (male or female)
- Shared needles or syringes
- Received blood products between 1978 and 1985
- Had sex with anyone who has done any of these things

Why should you take the test?

If you are infected with HIV, there are things you can do to stay healthy longer. Research shows that early treatment can help delay the onset of AIDS. You can also take steps to avoid infecting other people with HIV.

If you are pregnant and infected with HIV, there are medicines you can take to reduce your baby's risk of getting HIV.