

# Information About Your HIV Antibody Test

## Fact Sheet

### About the HIV Antibody Test

The test will tell if you have antibodies to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in your blood. Having HIV antibodies in the blood means a person has HIV infection.

You may have to wait two weeks or more for your test results. Results will be given in person to you only. Talk to your counselor about when you are to come back and make sure you come back for your results.

### HIV vs. AIDS, What's the Difference?

**Having an HIV infection** means you have the virus in your body and can give it to others through sex (oral, anal or vaginal) or sharing needles. Your immune system may still be strong, and you may look and feel fine. If you are pregnant, your unborn child could also get infected with HIV.

**Having AIDS** means your weakened immune system can no longer protect the body - even from germs that usually do no harm. This can lead to a number of life-threatening health problems. **This test is a test for HIV antibodies. Only a doctor can diagnose AIDS.**

### What if I test negative?

A negative test result means there were no HIV antibodies found in this blood test at the time of testing.

#### **But...**

Because it can take weeks for antibodies to appear, people who were recently infected can still test negative. **Remember: it could be too soon for antibodies to show up.** Talk to your counselor honestly about when you have been at risk, and when you might need to come back and be tested again.

#### **And...**

**Having a negative HIV test won't protect you from getting infected in the future.** If you have unprotected sex or share needles, you could still get infected.

### What if I test positive?

If your test result is positive for HIV, you will know that your blood has been tested three different times with two different kinds of very accurate tests.

You will be encouraged to see a physician and have other tests done right away. This is to see how your immune system is working and to check for other infections that take advantage of a weakened immune system, such as TB.

Your counselor or another public health professional will talk to you about how to tell your sex and needle-sharing partners. This can be hard to talk about; at the same time, your partners need to know they are at risk. The public health professional is skilled at telling partners confidentially (that is: without letting them know anything about you). You may want to use this service instead of telling partners yourself.

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### **Help Stop the Spread of HIV.**

People who have HIV may not donate blood, plasma, body organs, or sperm. A woman with HIV may want to avoid pregnancy. If she does become pregnant, early prenatal care can reduce the chances that the unborn child will get infected with HIV.

HIV gets from one person to another through sex or needle-sharing. The surest ways to avoid spreading HIV are not having sex and not sharing needles. For people who have sex, condoms - used correctly and consistently - can provide good protection against HIV and some common sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Alcohol and other drug use, even if needles are not shared, can contribute to risk by causing people to make dangerous choices about sex. Drug treatment programs are available for people who want to stop using. Talk to your counselor about what will work best for you.

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

*Texas HIV/STD InfoLine*

*1-800-299-2437 (English/Español)*

*Web site: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd)*

*CDC-INFO (National HIV/STD Hotline)*

*1-800-CDC-INFO*

*1-888-232-6348 (TTY)*

*Web site: [www.hivtest.org](http://www.hivtest.org)*

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