

## Deciding to Get an HIV Test

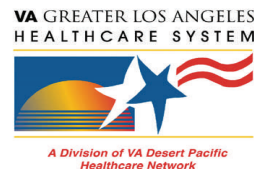
Deciding whether to get an HIV test may not be easy. Fear and worry are common feelings. Talking with your health provider can help you decide if this test is right for you and how to respond to the results of the test. HIV health educational material can also explain HIV testing options and answer questions about HIV risk and transmission.



## Delivery of Test Results

Your health provider can explain what your test results mean. He or she can give you information about how to protect yourself and others from HIV, no matter what the test results are. If your test result is positive, your health provider can direct you to medical, legal and emotional support services, as needed. He or she can also tell you about the services available through the VA.

FOR INFORMATION  
ONLINE VISIT:  
<http://www.hiv.va.gov>



8.6.09 PERC LAACC

# Rapid Oral HIV Test



## Questions & Answers

## What is the Rapid Oral HIV Test?

This test tells if you have HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

With the rapid test, results take only 20 minutes.



## How Does the Rapid Oral HIV Test Work?

When HIV enters the body, antibodies are produced. The test looks for HIV antibodies in your body.

## Who is at Risk for HIV?

HIV is considered a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD). Anyone who has had sex with someone (vaginal, anal or oral), male or female, should consider having an HIV test.

## Other risk factors include:

- Sharing needles or works to inject drugs/vitamins or for tattooing/piercing.
- Having sex with an injection drug user.
- Having been a sex partner with someone who has HIV.
- Being a victim of sexual assault.
- Having a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

## What Happens When you Agree to be Tested?

- The test is explained to you by a health provider.
- A health provider will ask you to rub your gums with a special cotton pad.
- Results are ready in 20 minutes.
- You will learn your results and discuss what they mean.
- Your test result will be confidential (results will only be discussed with you). Your test result will not affect your VA benefits.

## What Does a Negative Test Result Mean?

This means that HIV antibodies have not been found at this time in your system.



This could mean one of two things:

1. You do not have HIV **OR**
2. You have HIV but it can take up to 3 months for your system to produce enough antibodies to show on a test result. If you have engaged in activities that have put you at risk for HIV infection in the past 3 months, you should repeat this test in 90 days.

## What Does a Positive Test Result Mean?

This means HIV antibodies may be in your system. Positive results must always be confirmed by another test that is sent to the lab.



A confirmed positive test result means:

- You have HIV and can give it to other people during vaginal, anal or oral sex.
- You can give HIV to others if you share needles and works to inject drugs/vitamins or for any other reason.
- A pregnant woman may pass the HIV virus to the fetus in her womb or to the baby during birth or breastfeeding. Medications are available to reduce the risk of transmission.

## Why Should You Get Tested?

- Getting diagnosed early can improve your quality of life and improve your treatment options.
- Knowing your HIV status helps you protect yourself and others.
- If you test negative, you may feel less anxious after testing.
- An HIV test is part of routine medical care.