

HIV Testing

What is HIV Testing?

A HIV test is a test to detect antibodies to HIV. Antibodies are substances formed by the immune system in response to a substance foreign to the body. Thus, if someone were infected with HIV, a person with a healthy immune system will produce antibodies to HIV.

Who should get tested for HIV?

- Any person who has had unprotected sex – vaginal, oral or anal. This includes sex between people of the same gender or opposite gender.
- Persons who shared needles to inject drugs or steroids, for body piercing or tattooing.
- Sex partners of persons who share needles or inject drugs.
- Persons who have unprotected contact with someone else's blood, semen, female vaginal fluids, breast milk and internal body fluids.

What is the difference between an anonymous HIV test and a confidential HIV test?

Anonymous testing is done with a code number. The HIV Test Counselor does not ask your name nor is there identifying information that can be traced or reported to the New York State Department of Health. There is no copy of test results available for you if you wanted a copy.

Confidential testing does identify a person receiving a HIV test by name and the information is kept in a confidential file. Testing information may be legally disclosed to certain individuals or agencies if permission is granted by the individual by giving informed consent for disclosure. Positive HIV antibody test results are reported to the New York State Department of Health.

What types of HIV tests are available locally?

1. **Standard HIV Antibody Blood Test** – requires a blood draw (approximately 2 teaspoons). The blood is sent to a laboratory for testing. Results are usually available in 2 weeks. The individual must return to test site to get their results.
2. **Oral Fluid Testing** is an alternative antibody test in which a specially treated pad is put between the lower gum and cheek. The oral fluid is tested for antibodies.
3. **Rapid Testing** – a finger prick is done to get one drop of blood that is tested for antibodies. Results are available in 20 minutes. If the results are negative, no further testing is necessary unless your exposure occurred less than 30 days before testing. If the results are reactive (preliminary positive) a confirmatory test must be completed – either a standard HIV antibody blood test or an oral fluid test.

What if I have more questions regarding HIV testing?

Call the Broome County Health Department at 778-2839 or the New York State Dept. of Health at 1-800-562-9423 or check their website at: www.state.health.ny.us/nysdoh/aids/index.htm.

Where can I get a HIV test locally?

1. Broome County:
 - Broome County Health Department – call 778- 2839 for more information
 - Southern Tier AIDS Program – call 798-1706 or 1-800-333-0892
2. Chenango County:
 - Chenango Memorial Hospital – call 337-4217
 - Planned Parenthood – call 334-6378
3. Tioga County:
 - Tioga County Health Department – call 687-8600
 - Tioga Opportunities – call 687-5333

At times, HIV Testing Clinics are provided in association with special community awareness events. Check the calendar for the Network to see if a special HIV testing event is scheduled.

Also, some medical offices and private physicians offer HIV testing, but the testing may be limited to their established patients. Ask your primary care provider if they do testing for HIV.

What are the costs for a HIV test?

Anonymous testing is free. Confidential testing and testing done in a physician's office may have a cost. Ask the provider if there is a cost for the test and if your insurance pays for testing.

For more information about HIV testing in New York State, call: 1-800-562-9423.
Spanish speaking persons may call: 1-800-233-7432.

Information is also available on the NYS Health Dept. website at: www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/aids/index.htm.

Reference: New York State Department of Health,
www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/aids/index.htm.