

LUCIE TEEN

HEALTH

National HIV Testing Day

JUNE 27

National HIV Testing Day

First launched in **1995** to encourage everyone to know their HIV status.

This year's theme, "**Level up your self-love: check your status,**" highlights the importance of testing as an act of self-respect and self-care.

Who's at risk for HIV?

ANYONE can get HIV, but the highest-risk groups include those who have **UNPROTECTED SEX**, those who **SHARE NEEDLES**, or those who live in communities with high HIV prevalence

Who should get tested?

Everyone between the ages of 13- 64 should get tested **AT LEAST ONCE**.

Importance of Teen Testing

Nearly **1 in 5 NEW DIAGNOSES** in the U.S. are among those between the **AGES of 13-24**. Testing is the only way to know your HIV status.

What is HIV & AIDS?

HIV is a virus that attacks your immune system, and **AIDS is a condition** when your immune system becomes so damaged by HIV that you develop severe infections or cancers.

Even if a person has HIV, **AIDS IS AVOIDABLE** with medication and care.

HIV can be spread through **BLOOD, SEMEN, VAGINAL FLUID, BREAST MILK** or **NEEDLE SHARING**. It is **not** transmitted through saliva, bath water, sneezes, coughs, sharing utensils, nor handshakes.

How often should you get tested?

If you're sexually active, you should get tested **ONCE PER YEAR**. If you use injection drugs, or take PrEP, you should get tested **EVERY 3 MONTHS**.

Even though **EFFECTIVE TREATMENT** helps people with HIV live healthy lives, many still avoid testing due to fear and stigma; some teens might be concerned about being seen, at an HIV testing location, or are fearful of obtaining a positive result.

Good News! With early treatment, a person diagnosed with AIDS can rebuild their immune system and become healthy again, to no longer meet the criteria for AIDS.

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There are two HIV tests, an **ANTIBODY TEST** (on testing day) and a **NUCLEIC ACID TEST** (offered to you after, if your test day result is “reactive”).

HIV ANTIBODY TEST

Detects whether your body has made HIV antibodies.

Results will be: REACTIVE (possible infection) or **NON-REACTIVE** (likely negative)

FINGER-PRICK TEST

A rapid blood test

Uses a small drop of blood from your fingertip, to test for HIV antibodies and/ or antigens (HIV proteins)

SWAB TEST

A rapid oral fluid test

Collects fluid from your gums to test for the presence of HIV antibodies

The **NUCLEIC ACID TEST** is the **MOST ACCURATE** test available. If HIV nucleic acid material is detected in your blood, the virus is in your body.

HIV NUCLEIC ACID TEST

Detects the actual virus in your blood. Not usually done on test day, because it requires a larger blood sample from a vein. **Results will be: POSITIVE** or **NEGATIVE**

Can HIV Tests Be Wrong?

A **FALSE POSITIVE** may happen if your immune system reacts to something that looks like HIV, causing you to make an antibody that cross-reacts with a test designed to detect an HIV antibody

A **FALSE NEGATIVE** result can occur if a person is tested too early, when the body does not yet show signs of an HIV infection

If you test **positive**, find a trusted medical provider and **start treatment right away**. With medication, you **CAN LIVE A LONG, HEALTHY LIFE !**

Important: It can take up to 3 months after infection for your immune system to make antibodies, or for the virus to reach detectable levels. **RETESTING IN 3 MONTHS IS OFTEN RECOMMENDED IF YOUR INITIAL RESULT IS NEGATIVE.**