

WHO SHOULD BE TESTING FOR HIV?

HIV testing is appropriate for anyone who may have been exposed to HIV. HIV exposure can occur through sexual contact without the use of an effective HIV prevention strategy (such as treatment as prevention, PrEP or condoms), sharing of needles or exposure to bodily fluids such as blood.

People who should consider routine, regular HIV testing include:

- gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men
- trans and gender diverse people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people who inject drugs
- people who have multiple partners or recent partner change
- sexual and injecting partners of people living with HIV
- people who are from, have travelled to, or have partners from countries with high rates of HIV

It is recommended sexually active gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men test for HIV four times per year.

WHAT IS AN HIV SELF-TEST?

An HIV Self-Test is an HIV test you can perform yourself in the privacy of your own home or wherever you feel comfortable. The HIV Self-Test available in Australia is discrete, accurate and easy to use.

The HIV Self-Test is a small cartridge containing a paper test strip. It is similar in size and shape to a USB drive. Included in the HIV Self-Test pack will be an HIV Self-Test cartridge, a set of instructions, a bottle of test fluid (which is added along with a blood sample), and a disposal bag. The pack contains a Care Card, which includes a list of contacts in case you have questions or concerns about the test or your test result.

There is currently only one test approved for sale in Australia, the Atomo HIV Self-Test. It is important to only buy devices approved for sale by the Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA), so you can be sure the result is accurate and the device is safe to use.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The test is a finger-prick blood test. The result is provided within fifteen minutes after performing the test.

HOW ACCURATE IS THE TEST?

The window period for the HIV Self-Test is up to three months. This means the test may not detect HIV acquired in the last three months.

If you think you have been exposed to HIV in the last three months, it is important to speak to a doctor or visit a sexual health clinic. If the potential exposure occurred within the last 72 hours, you may be eligible for Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), which can prevent HIV acquisition occurring – you can find more information on PEP here: www.getpep.info.

WHERE DO I GET ONE?

There are three ways of purchasing an HIV Self-Test in Australia:

1. From December 2021 HIV Self-Tests will start becoming available in chemists across Australia. The test will be available over the counter.
2. HIV Self-Tests are available at organisations such as AIDS Councils. You can find a list of relevant local organisations selling HIV Self-Test [here](#).
3. HIV Self-Tests are available for purchase online here: www.atomohivtest.com. This includes an instructional video on the proper use of the test.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I GET A POSITIVE RESULT?

While the Self-Test is very accurate, it is a screening test. Because it is a screening test, getting a positive result does not mean you have HIV. If you have received a positive result it will still need to be confirmed with further testing by a doctor. The Care Card has more information about accessing follow-up testing.

If you return a positive result from follow-up testing, it is important you speak to a doctor about starting treatment. HIV is a manageable condition. Treatment today is very effective and those living with HIV are able to live long and healthy lives.

For more information on HIV Self-Testing please contact AFAO on (02) 9557 9399.