

**PROVIDE COPY TO INMATE AT PRE-COUNSELING SESSION**

This information is to help you understand about the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), how it's spread, what risks increase the chances of becoming infected and, about the test that determines if you are infected.

HIV is found in the blood, semen, vaginal secretions of an infected person. This virus is associated with the development of the disease commonly known as the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), which can weaken the body's ability to fight off infection, resulting in an increased risk of infection that is life threatening. This test determines if you have HIV antibodies in your blood and are infected with HIV. It is not a test for AIDS.

**RISK FACTORS THAT MAY INCREASE THE CHANCES OF BECOMING INFECTED**

- \_\_\_ 1. Have had sex with a man.
- \_\_\_ 2. Have had sex with a woman.
- \_\_\_ 3. Injected drugs.
- \_\_\_ 4. Have had sexual relations with a person of the opposite sex with any of the following:
- \_\_\_ 1. intravenous/injection drug use
  - \_\_\_ 2. bisexual male
  - \_\_\_ 3. person with bleeding disorder (e.g. hemophilia)
  - \_\_\_ 4. transfusion recipient with documented HIV infection
  - \_\_\_ 5. transplant recipient with documented HIV infection
  - \_\_\_ 6. person with HIV infection or AIDS, or unknown risk
- \_\_\_ 5. Received clotting factors for bleeding disorder:
- \_\_\_ 6. Received an organ transplant or had artificial insemination
- \_\_\_ 7. Have worked as health care or laboratory worker with contact with blood or other potentially infectious bodily fluids
- \_\_\_ 8. Have a tattoo that was administered in jail or prison.

Some commonly asked questions about testing are listed below:

1) **Who will see my test results?**

The results of your test are confidential and revealed only on a "need to know" basis, such as to your health care provider(s) or the state health department if required by State law. No one else outside of the Bureau of Prisons or health department can be given your test results unless you authorize a release of information.

2) **What are the possible test results?**

A negative test result means no HIV antibodies are detected in your blood at this time.

A positive test result means there is an infection with HIV. It does not mean a person has AIDS.

A test can rarely be inconclusive which means it's neither negative or positive. Your provider will discuss the need for retesting, should this occur.

3) **Could the test results be inaccurate?**

Based on the steps processed by the laboratory to confirm the test, the results are considered more than 99% accurate. It is highly unlikely that the result is inaccurate.

Inaccurate HIV antibody results are termed *false negative* or *false positive*.

A *false negative* means the test indicates no evidence or infection when the individual is actually infected.

A *false positive* means the test indicates evidence of infection when the individual is actually not infected. This is extremely rare.

4) **Why would a false negative occur?**

A *false negative* usually occurs because the test may not detect infection that's in the early stage. This happens because the test measures proteins (antibodies) in the blood that develop over weeks to months as the body reacts to infection with the virus. Antibodies may be detected as early as a month after infection with HIV, but can take up to 6 months to be measurable. Therefore, if a person was recently infected, the HIV antibody test may be negative. This is an example of a false negative. If you think you are at risk of being infected or have recently engaged in risky activity and your test result is negative, you should discuss the need for retesting with your medical provider.

5) **Why would a false positive occur?**

A *false positive* can be associated with past injecting drug use, pregnancy, certain blood abnormalities, other related-viruses, and even contamination of the blood sample. Although this is very rare, a small chance of this occurring still exists. If you are absolutely certain you have none of the risk factors and received positive test results, discuss your concerns with your health care provider.

6) **What if my results are positive?**

If your results are positive, you are infected with HIV. Your doctor will advise you of additional testing and recommended treatment options for HIV infection. Remember, a positive result does not mean you have AIDS and with current treatments, persons with HIV infection are living longer and healthier lives.

7) **How long do I have to wait for the test results?**

The test results are usually available in about two weeks. Check with your provider on the process for obtaining your test results.

9) **How can I protect myself from HIV infection?**

During incarceration:

Abstain from sexual activity with other inmates, do not inject drugs, do not share razors or toothbrushes with other inmates, or get a tattoo, and avoid all other high risk behaviors. If you have a history of using illegal drugs or have a problem with alcohol abuse, seek advice on drug treatment programs available during incarceration and upon release from health care staff, social workers, psychology staff, or drug counselors.

Upon release:

Abstain from sexual activity or have sexual intercourse with only one partner and know whether he or she is infected or not. Talk honestly with your sexual partner and if they do not know if they are infected, encourage them to get tested. If you do choose to engage in sexual activity, the best current method of prevention is to use a condom or "rubber" to prevent contact with your partner's body fluids. This is no absolute protection, since condoms can tear. Becoming pregnant or getting a woman pregnant when infected which may pass HIV infection to the unborn child. You should seek further advice and HIV education on more specific methods of preventing infection from your health care provider or from community AIDS prevention organizations upon release.

Abstain from injecting drugs, which is strongly associated with many health risks including infection with the hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and HIV. Many local health departments and community AIDS prevention organizations can refer you to drug treatment programs and other support services in the community.

If you do continue to engage in injection drug use, you should use clean needles whenever possible, and never share your needles or other injection drug use equipment with others. You may reduce your chances of infection by rinsing the "works" with a bleach solution but this is not always effective or safe. You should contact a health care provider knowledgeable in this area to get specific instructions.

If you have any future questions, discuss them with your health care provider.

