

# HIV-1/HIV-2 Rapid Screen



## Does this test have other names?

Rapid HIV antibody test

## What is this test?

This test looks for HIV infection in your blood or saliva.

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. About 1 in 5 people who are infected with HIV don't know it because they may not have symptoms. HIV comes in 2 forms:

- **HIV-1.** This type is found worldwide.
- **HIV-2.** This type is mainly found in western Africa. But it has spread to the U.S.

This test is one of several tests that look for HIV infection. Some tests take a few days for results to come back. Rapid HIV tests can give your results in about 20 minutes. Getting an early diagnosis of HIV is important because you can start treatment early and also take steps to keep from spreading the virus to others.

## Why do I need this test?

You may have this test if your healthcare provider thinks that you have HIV infection. These are symptoms of HIV infection:

- Sudden weight loss
- Night sweats or fever
- Extreme tiredness
- Swollen lymph nodes
- White spots in your mouth or throat
- Ongoing (chronic) diarrhea
- Pneumonia
- Reddish splotches on your skin or in your mouth
- Forgetfulness
- Depression

You may also have this test if you are at risk for HIV. The CDC recommends HIV testing for these groups:

- People who have had unprotected sex with multiple partners and had unprotected sex with any partner, with men who have sex with men, or with strangers
- People who have had sex for money or drugs
- People who inject drugs or steroids, or who share their injecting equipment with others
- People who have been diagnosed with hepatitis, tuberculosis, or a sexually transmitted infection (STI)

- People who had unprotected sex with anyone who might have the above risk factors
- You may also have this test if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

Some people who aren't in a high-risk group choose to be tested just to be sure they don't have HIV.

## What other tests might I have along with this test?

Your healthcare provider may also order tests for other STIs. If the results of the rapid HIV test are positive, your provider will order another test to confirm the findings.

## What do my test results mean?

Test results may vary depending on your age, gender, health history, and other things. Your test results may be different depending on the lab used. They may not mean you have a problem. Ask your healthcare provider what your test results mean for you.

Normal results are negative. This means that no antibodies were found and that you may not be infected with HIV. Most people who become infected with HIV will develop antibodies to the virus within 2 months. During this time, you may have HIV, but this test can't detect it. You may need to repeat the test more than 3 months after your possible exposure if your results are negative.

A positive result means that HIV antibodies were found and that you may have HIV.

## How is this test done?

Rapid HIV testing is done with a sample of either blood or saliva. For a blood sample, a needle is used to draw blood from a vein in your arm or hand. For a saliva sample, your healthcare provider will rub a special swab against your gums.

## Does this test pose any risks?

Having a blood test with a needle carries some risks. These include bleeding, infection, bruising, and feeling lightheaded. When the needle pricks your arm or hand, you may feel a slight sting or pain. Afterward, the site may be sore.

## What might affect my test results?

Having the test too soon after you are infected with HIV may give you a false-negative result.

## How do I get ready for this test?

You don't need to prepare for this test. Be sure your healthcare provider knows about all medicines, herbs, vitamins, and supplements you are taking. This includes medicines that don't need a prescription and any illegal drugs you may use.

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