

HIV

**KNOW
THE
FACTS**

**GET
TESTED**

THE HIV TEST

The HIV test is a blood test that looks for HIV antibodies in your bloodstream.

The Window Period:

It can take from one to three months after infection for HIV antibodies to show up in a person's bloodstream and be detected in a test. If you test during this period you may need to return and re-test. If you have been infected with HIV, you can transmit it to others during this 'window period'.

HIV (and STI) testing is confidential. Pre- and post-test counseling may be available at some STI clinics.

By getting tested and knowing your status you can:

- Get the essential care and treatment necessary for living a healthy life with HIV.
- Make informed decisions about preventing transmission.
- Protect your partner(s) as well as yourself.

The outcome of an HIV test does not affect a person's legal status in Ireland.

All medical treatment for HIV is free in public hospitals in Ireland.



HIV IS A SERIOUS CHRONIC ILLNESS THAT AFFECTS THE BODY'S IMMUNE SYSTEM. IT REQUIRES TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT FOR LIFE.

You can have HIV and not have any symptoms.

The only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested.

If you are sexually active, go for a regular sexual health check-up.

**Get a free
check-up at
HIV Ireland,
or your nearest
STI Clinic.**



HIV TRANSMISSION

HIV is found in:

- Blood
- Semen
- Rectal Secretions*
- Vaginal Fluid
- Breast Milk

*a natural mucus that is found in the anus/rectum

Having another STI can increase the chances of acquiring or transmitting HIV infection.

HIV cannot be transmitted by: hugging, kissing or holding hands; toilet seats; sweat; sharing cutlery, plates, cups; sharing a bath/swimming pool; mosquito bites; animal bites; working/going to school together.

You can get HIV through:

- Having vaginal and anal sex without a condom with someone who is HIV positive and is not on effective HIV treatment.
- Having oral sex without a condom with someone who is HIV positive and is not an effective HIV treatment. Oral sex presents a low risk but the risk is higher if a person has cuts or open sores on the mouth, cheeks, gums or throat.
- Sharing needles or drug injecting/using equipment with someone who has HIV and is not on effective treatment
- Contaminated blood products (very unlikely in Ireland as blood donations are checked)
- Mother to baby: during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding where the mother is HIV positive and is not on effective HIV treatment.



HIV PREVENTION

You can reduce your risk of getting HIV by:

- Using condoms every time you have vaginal and anal sex
- Using condoms or dental dams every time you have oral sex
- Taking PEP * see next page
- Taking PrEP * see next page
- Getting tested and knowing your HIV status
- Treatment as Prevention: A HIV positive person on effective HIV treatment cannot pass on HIV.
- Not sharing sex toys
- Not sharing needles and/or other drug injecting/using equipment
- Informing and educating yourself about the risks.



PEP: POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS

PEP is a course of medication that aims to prevent HIV infection following a recent sexual or needle-stick exposure to HIV.

- PEP works to prevent HIV from establishing itself in the bloodstream.
- PEP must be started within 72 hours (3 days) after the possible exposure to HIV.
- PEP is effective but is not a cure for HIV.

PEP is only available by prescription from some hospital emergency departments and STI clinics. Not everyone will be prescribed PEP - this is based on an assessment at the clinic or hospital.

If you have had a very recent exposure to HIV, you should go to your nearest hospital emergency department or STI clinic as soon as possible. PEP treatment is free in Ireland.

PREP: PRE- EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS

PrEP is medication that prevents HIV infection if taken properly. PrEP is only for people who are HIV negative.

How does PrEP work?

PrEP taken daily is proven to be safe and very effective in stopping HIV from establishing itself inside the body.

PrEP is only available on private prescription in Ireland. It is not covered by the Medical Card or Drug Payment Scheme.

If you are taking PrEP it is important that you are monitored for HIV, other STIs and any side effects of the medication.

For more information on PrEP visit www.hivireland.ie

FREE HIV AND STI TESTS ARE AVAILABLE AT:

HIV Ireland

www.hivireland.ie

70 Eccles Street, Dublin 7

Walk-in Clinic

Second and fourth Wednesdays
of every month.

Doors open 1pm.

Clinic starts at 1:30pm.

Dates can vary.

Tel: 01 873 3799 for details.

GUIDE Clinic

St. James's Hospital

www.guideclinic.ie

James's Street, Dublin 8

Walk-in Clinic

Mondays from 9am, and Tuesdays
and Thursdays from 1:30pm

Tel: 01 416 2315

Gay Men's Health Service (GMHS) Walk-in Clinic

For men who have sex with men

Mondays, 2pm to 4pm

Every Tuesday and Wednesday.

Doors Open 5pm to 6:30pm.

Address and contact

details at www.gmhs.ie

Or from your nearest STI clinic.

See www.hivireland.ie for a list.



CONDOMS, WHEN USED CORRECTLY, OFFER THE BEST PROTECTION AGAINST THE TRANSMISSION OF HIV AND MOST STIS.

Free condoms are available at:

HIV Ireland,
70 Eccles Street,
Dublin 7

Tel: 01 873 3799

Email: info@hivireland.ie

www.hivireland.ie for more
information on HIV, living with
HIV, STIs, and Hepatitis.

Produced by

HIV Ireland (updated 2018)

