Should I Take The Test?
What is the HIV antibody test?

The testing process is simple. A small amount of blood will be taken from your arm. Your blood will be tested to see if your body has come into contact with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the virus which causes AIDS.

This is not a test for AIDS. This test will not tell you if you have AIDS. It will only tell you if you have HIV in your body. If you have become infected with the virus, this test will find HIV antibodies in your blood.

What is AIDS?

AIDS is a deadly disease caused by a virus called HIV. It is also called the AIDS virus. The virus can destroy your body's ability to defend itself against getting sick.

Not everyone who gets HIV is sick. Doctors still do not know why some people get sick and others do not. Doctors do know that anyone who has HIV in their body can give it to someone else.

You can get HIV by having unprotected sex, or by sharing dirty needles and syringes (works) used to take drugs with someone who has HIV in their body.
What can the HIV antibody test tell me?

*If the test says that you are positive:*  
If your test is positive this means that your body is carrying HIV antibodies. It does not mean that you have AIDS. It means that you have been infected with the virus and your body has developed a reaction. It means that if you are not careful you can give HIV to other people.

*If the test says you are negative:*  
If your test is negative this means that there is no evidence of antibodies to HIV in your blood.

A negative test result can also mean that you may be infected but your body has not had time to develop a reaction. Sometimes it takes as long as six months to develop a reaction. You may want to take the test again in six months.

If you want to keep your body HIV-free, you must make sure that you follow all of the steps in “How to Protect Yourself from Getting HIV” all of the time.

**Why should I care if my body carries HIV?**

If you know that you carry HIV you can do two important things for yourself:

1) You can change any unsafe sex or needle-sharing drug practices so that you do not give the virus to someone else.

2) You can take steps to keep yourself healthy. Not everyone who has HIV is sick. Even if you have the virus, you may reduce your chances of getting sick with AIDS by maintaining your health. It is important to see a doctor to find out about the treatments that are available.
I am not sure if I have come in contact with the virus, but I am worried. Should I take the test?

You may want to take the test if you think that you or your sex partner - or someone you have shared needle drugs with - has taken part in any of the following unsafe practices:

1) During sex you have allowed semen or vaginal fluids of your sex partner to enter your body.

2) You or your partner have shared needle drugs with each other, or with someone else.

3) You or your partner have had vaginal or anal sex with someone without using a condom.

What about having a baby? Should I take the test?

If you are considering having a baby, and you think that you or your partner might have shared needle drugs, or had unprotected sex with someone who may have HIV, you should seriously consider taking the test.
I am worried about other people finding out about my test.

If you are tested at an Alternative Test Site, your blood sample cannot be traced to your name. A coded number that only you know is used to identify it. This is what is known as an anonymous test.

OR

You can be tested by your own doctor or at other testing sites. You will have to give your name before you get tested. No one can give your test results to anyone without your knowledge or permission. This is what is known as a confidential test.

1-415-864-6606 (Hearing Impaired/TDD)

1-800-367-2437 (Bilingual: English/Spanish)

In Northern California:

For more information call the hotline...

1-800-922-2437

In Southern California:

1-800-222-7432

Spanish Speaking:

1-800-553-2437

Hearing Impaired/TDD:

For more information call the hotline...
How to protect yourself from getting HIV

1) When you are having sex, do not allow your semen or vaginal fluids to enter your partner's body. Do not allow their semen or vaginal fluids to enter your body.

2) Always wear a new latex condom during vaginal and anal sex.

3) Do not inject drugs into your body. Do not share needles and syringes (works). If you continue to share your works, you must clean them correctly before and after each use.

4) Talk to your partners about past and present sexual practices and drug use.

5) Remember: Many people who carry HIV are not sick and do not know they have it. YOU MUST PROTECT YOURSELF.
Should I take the HIV antibody test?

Before you decide to take the HIV antibody test it is important to have enough information to make the best decision for you.

You should be able to answer three questions:

* What is AIDS?
* What is the HIV antibody test?
* What can the test tell me?

When you understand what AIDS is, when you understand what the antibody test is, and when you know what the test can tell you, then ask yourself:

Should I take the test?
If you decide to take the test, telephone an Alternative Test Site to make an appointment. For Alternative Test Site locations, call the AIDS Hotline at 1-800-367-2437 (in Northern California) or 1-800-922-2437 (in Southern California).

Please Note: The printing date of this brochure is 1991. Call the Hotline for updates on safer practices and guidelines.

This brochure was produced under a grant from the State of California by AIDS Project Los Angeles.
HIV Antibody Testing

RESOURCES

Medical Services, Crisis Intervention, Peer Support and Counseling, Social Services, Legal Advice, and More

A Program of the San Francisco Department of Public Health

Compiled by the AIDS Health Project

Summer 1991

For a Test Appointment
Call 621-4858
INFORMATION

GENERAL POPULATION
San Francisco

SF AIDS Foundation Hotline .......................................................... 863-AIDS
Toll Free .......................................................... 1-800-FOR-AIDS
Hearing Impaired TTD .......................................................... 864-6606
AIDS Health Project .......................................................... 476-6430
AIDS/HIV Nightline
(Weeknights 9pm-5am; Sat-Sun 5pm-5am) ....................... 668-AIDS
AIDS Information BBS .................................................. Voice 626-1245
(Computer Bulletin Board) ........................................ Modem 626-1246
BAPHR-Bay Area Phys. for Human Rights ................. 558-9353
Physician Referral ......................................................... 673-3189
Filipino AIDS HOTLINE (SF AIDS Fndtn) 1-800-FIL-AIDS
Lesbian/Gay Switchboard, Pacific Center .................. 841-6224
Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt ......................... 863-5511
Nat'l. AIDS Hotline ................................................ 1-800-342-AIDS
Hearing Impaired .................................................... 1-800-AIDS-TDD
Spanish ......................................................... 1-800-344-SIDA
National Native American AIDS HOTLINE 1-800-283-AIDS
Project Inform .......................................................... 558-9051
Toll Free .......................................................... 1-800-334-7422
SF City, Dept. Pub. Health AIDS Office .................. 554-9000
SF Medical Society ................................................. 567-6230
Sex Information. Hotline ........................................... 621-7300
SF Suicide Prevention (crisis line) .......................... 221-1423
Drug Information ..................................................... 752-3400
Mental Health Info & Referral ................................. 387-5100

East Bay
AIDS Labor Education Proj ............................................... 642-5507
AIDS Minority Hlth. Initiative ..................................... 763-1872
AIDS Project of the East Bay ........................................ 834-8181
Alameda Co. AIDS Office .............................................. 268-2639
East Bay AIDS Center .................................................. 540-1870
East Bay Asian AIDS Coor. Committee ...................... 444-AIDS
East Bay Open Hand ..................................................... 654-2170
East Bay Women's AIDS Network .............................. 268-2559
Lesbian/Gay Switchboard Pacific Center .................. 841-6224
Pacific Center (Sexual Minorities) .............................. 548-8283

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Multicultural Organizations
AIDS Health Project ..................................................... 476-6430
Black and White Men- Men of All Colors Together
HIV Support & Educational Services ......................... 749-6714
E.A.C.H. (Early Advocacy& Care for HIV) .................. 864-1214
Multicultural Training Resource Center ................. 861-2142
SPAF  Third World AIDS Advisory Task Force .......... 647-7655
American Indian
American Indian AIDS Institute ........................................... 626-7639
Gay American Indians, AIDS Outreach Prog. ............... 441-0565
National Native American AIDS HOTLINE 1-800-283-AIDS
Sf Native American Health Clinic ........................................ 621-8051

African-American
African American Men's Health Project ......................... 597-9137
Bayview-Hunter's Pt. Fnd. .................................................. 822-7500
Black Coalition on AIDS ................................................. 553-8197
Kapuna West Inner-City Child/Family AIDS Net. ...... 863-0925
Nat'l Task Force/AIDS Prev. (Black/Latino Gay) ....... 749-6700
Westside AIDS Case Management .................................... 431-9000

Asian & Pacific Islanders
Asian AIDS Project ......................................................... 227-0946
Asian/Pacific AIDS Coalition, SF ................................. 512-3400
Ctr. for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement .... 885-2743
Gay Asian/Pacific Alliance Comm. HIV Project .......... 512-3400
Japanese Comm. Youth Council ....................................... 563-1717
Korean Comm. Svce. Ctr. ................................................. 751-4190
Filipino AIDS Education Project ................................. 882-9291
Filipino Task Force on AIDS .......................................... 512-3403
Filipino AIDS HOTLINE ................................................. 1-800-FIL-AIDS

Caregivers
Kairos House, Caregivers Support .................................... 861-0877
Shanti Project ................................................................. 777-2273
AIDS Service Providers Assoc. of the Bay Area ...... 241-5519
Family Survival Project .................................................. 434-3388
Family AIDS Support Network (FANS) ...................... 349-0542

Gay/Lesbian
Lesbian/Gay Switchboard, Pacific Center .................... 841-6224
Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays ............. 921-8850
Gay Legal Referral Service ............................................. 621-3900
National Gay Rights Advocates ................................. 863-3624
National Center for Lesbian Rights ......................... 621-0674
SF AIDS Found. Gay/Bisexual Mens Pgm ............ 864-5855 x2511

Deaf/Hearing Impaired
AIDS Hotline (SF AIDS Foundation) ................. (TDD) 864-6606
Catholic Charities Hearing Imp. Prgm. ................... (TDD) 567-0540
Nat'l. AIDS Hotline ......................................................... (800) AIDS-TTY
Nat'l Co. Alcoholism ...................................................... (TDD) 861-8630
Relay Service ............................................................... (TDD) 1-800-342-5966
............................................................... (Voice) 1-800-342-5833
SF DPH Hlth Cntr #2 Deaf Services ................. (TDD) 929-7384
SF Public Library Deaf Services Dept. .................. (TDD) 557-4433
Shanti Project .............................................................. (TDD) 495-7495
St. Benedicts Deaf AIDS Center ........................... (TDD) 346-8327
UC Center of Deafness ............................................... (TDD) 476-7600

Latino/Spanish Speaking
Hotline - National ....................................................... (800) 344-SIDA
**REFERRAL**

Hotline - N. Calif. (SF AIDS Fndtn.) ..........(800) FOR-AIDS
Hotline - San Francisco (SF AIDS Foundation) .... 863-AIDS
SF AIDS Fndtn., Bilingual Multicultural
Svcs., 25 Van Ness .......................... 864-5855, x 2519
CURAS, Comm. United Response to AIDS/SIDA .. 255-2731
Instituto Familiar de la Raza
Latino AIDS Project ................................ 647-5450
Mano A Mano ................................... 647-5450
Mission Neighborhood Health Clinic
La Clinica Esperanza (M-F 6-9:30 pm ) .......... 431-3212
National Task Force on AIDS Prevention ........... 749-6700

**Prison Inmates and ex-Inmates**
Forensic AIDS Project .......................... 863-8237

**Youth**
Bay Positives (AIDS Health Project) ...........  821-8764
Bayview Hunter’s Point Found. Youth Svcs. ....  821-1585
Cal-Pep (juvenile prostitutes) ....................  874-7850
Ctr. for Special Problems, 1700 Jackson ........ 558-4801
GAPA (Gay Asian Pacific Alliance) .............. 512-3400
Haight Asbury Free Clinic Detox Center .........  565-1903
Larkin St. Youth Center, 1040 Larkin ............ 673-0911
LYFE (Lambada Youth & Family Empowerment) .. 565-7681
Youth Advocates Inc., Teen HIV Program .......... 386-9398
AIDS Education for Youth ....................... 749-3400

**Women**
AIDS Health Project ................................ 476-6430
East Bay Women’s AIDS Network .................. 268-2639
IRIS Project, 333 Valencia ........................ 864-2364
National Center for Lesbian Rights ............... 621-0674
Lyon-Martin Clinic ................................ 565-7667
Planned Parenthood Alameda/San Francisco ........ 441-7858
Project Aware .................................... 476-4091
SF AIDS Fndtn. Women’s Program ............... 864-5855 x2513
Shanti Project .................................... 777-2273
Women’s AIDS Network ........................... 864-4376 ext. 2007
Women’s Alcoholism Ctr., 2261 Bryant .......... 282-8900
Women’s Inst.of Mental Health .................... 864-2364

**AIDS Information Hotline**
(SF AIDS Foundation English/Spanish)
In San Francisco ............................... 863-AIDS
Toll Free ........................................ (800)FOR-AIDS
Hearing Impaired ............................... 864-6606

_A publication of the AIDS Health Project, a program of the University of California at San Francisco, Dept. of Psychiatry, Box 0884, SF, CA 94143-0884 (415)476-6430_
The project provides antibody test services at San Francisco's Anonymous Test Sites and at SF General Hospital (confidential testing). The Project also provides support services to people with HIV infection and consultation services to agencies providing HIV related services.
CRISIS INTERVENTION
SF Suicide Prevention (crisis line) ........................................ 221-1423
Drug Line .............................................................................. 752-2450
Mental Health Inf & Referral .................................................. 387-5100
AIDS/HIV Nightline ................................................................. 668-AIDS or 1-800-273-AIDS
M-F 9am-1am, Sat-Sun 5am-9am
Mission Crisis (SF City) ............................................................. 558-2071
SF General Hosp. Psych. Emergency 111 Potrero ........................ 821-8125
St. Mary’s Hospital and Medical Ctr ........................................... 668-1030
SF General Rape Treatment Center .......................................... 821-9222

MEDICAL SERVICES
Health Screening
SF City Funded-Sliding Fee
Health Center #1, 256 17th St. .................................................. 554-9750
Health Center #2, 1301 Pierce St .............................................. 292-2120
Health Center #3, 1525 Silver .................................................... 468-3664
Health Center #4, 1490 Mason St .............................................. 558-3158
Health Center #5, 1351 24th Avenue ....................................... 661-6400
City Clinic (STD Only), 357 7th St ............................................ 864-8100
Potrero Hill Hlth. Ctrn., 1500 Wisconsin Ave. ......................... 648-3022
Southeast Health Center, 2401 Keith St .................................. 822-2850
Mission Neighborhood Health Center (AIDS Prv. and Follow-Up) .............................................................. 431-3212
SF General Hospital New Patient Referral .............................. 821-5166
Waddell Clinic, 50 Ivy St ......................................................... 554-2920
Symptomatic Only
SF General Hospital Ward 3 .................................................... 821-8800
Visiting Nurses and Hospice of SF ......................................... 861-7805
Ask About Fees
Davis Medical Center ............................................................... 565-6779
Haight-Ashbury Clinic, 558 Clayton ....................................... 431-1714
Kaiser (HIV Benefit Coordinator) ............................................. 929-5747
Larkin St. Youth Svc. (Street Youth) ......................................... 673-0911
Lyons-McInt Cl. (Women) ......................................................... 565-7667
Mt. Zion Hospital, 1600 Divisadero ......................................... 885-3745
Nutrition Clinic, UCSF, 400 Parknas ...................................... 476-2291
Pacific Pres. Med. Ctr, 2324 Sacramento .................................. 923-3515
Planned Parenthood ............................................................... 441-7858
SF Native American Health Clinic ............................................ 621-8051
St. Mary’s Hospital, 450 Stanyan ............................................. 668-5795
St. Luke’s Hospital ................................................................. 661-6535
UCSF AIDS Clinic, 400 Parknas #A555 .................................. 476-3226
Research Projects
(Many provide medical screening)
AZT Clinical Trials Referral ..................................................... 800-874-2572
Bay Area Perinatal AIDS Ctr (preg. only) ................................. 821-8919
Drs. Lues Medical Ctr Drug Trials Search ................................ 646-5638
Clinical Trials Referral .......................................................... 800-TRIALS-A

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
Counseling and Support Groups
AIDS Family Project .............................................................. 626-7000
AIDS Health Project .............................................................. 476-6430
Bayview-Hunter’s Point Foundation ........................................ 822-7500
Catholic Charities AIDS/ARC Services .................................... 846-4700
Center for Attitudinal Healing (Marin Co.) ............................... 435-5022
Center for Special Problems, 1700 Jackson ........................... 558-4881
Dignity Services & Gay Catholics ........................................... 255-9294
Mission Crisis ........................................................................ 558-2071
Most Holy Redeemer Support Group ...................................... 680-1581
Operation Concern, 1855 Market ........................................... 626-7000
SF AIDS Foundation (San Ysidro) .......................................... 584-8283
Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous .......................................... 771-8888
Shanti Project .......................................................................... 777-2273
SF AIDS Foundation (San Ysidro) Van Ness .......................... 864-8555
St. Mary’s Hosp. Support Groups ............................................ 750-5733
Tenderloin Outpt. Clinic, 251 Hyde ......................................... 673-5700
Visiting Nurses and Hospice (Bereavement Svcs) ................. 861-8705
Wadell Clinic’s Int. Mental Health ............................................. 864-2634
SF City Community Mental Health
Information and Referral ........................................................ 387-5100
Team 2 Outpatient Clinic, 298 Monterey ................................ 337-4795
Team 2 Outpatient Clinic, 3850 17th ....................................... 554-9760
Ethnic Services Emphasis
E.A.C.H. (Early Advocacy & Care for HIV) .............................. 864-1214
African-American
Bayview-Hunter’ s Foundation ............................................... 822-7500
Westside AIDS Case Mgmt, 1153 Oak .................................. 431-9000
Asian/Pacific Islander
Chinatown-No. Beach Clinic .................................................... 563-8052
Gay Asian Community Support ............................................. 541-2237
Richmond Area Multi-Services (Cantonese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Korean) ..................................................... 668-5955
So. of Market Mnt. Hlth (Top. C(au.) 471 Jesse .......... 777-3311
Latina/Spanish Speaking
Mission Mental Hlth Clinica Latina, 111 Potrero ...................... 558-5671
CURAS .................................................................................. 255-2731
Instituto Familiar de la Raza
Latino AIDS Project, 2401 24th St ......................................... 647-5450
SF AIDS Fndl. Bilingual 25 Van Ness ................................. 864-5855 x 2519
So. of Market Mental Health, 471 Jesse ............................... 777-3311

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES
General Population
AIDS and Substance Abuse Prog, AIDS Health Project, SFGW 92 .......................... 821-8764
Al-Anon (for persons affected by others drinking) .................. 626-5633
Alcoholics Anonymous ......................................................... 661-1828
Alcohol, Eval. and Treat, SFGH Ward 23 ............................... 821-8091
BAA/RC/T: Co-Occ. 5504 Geary ............................................. 928-7800
BNA/T: Co-Occ. 5504 Geary .................................................. 543-2565
BNA/T: Co-Occ. 5504 Geary .................................................. 346-6193
Haight-Ashbury Alcohol Svc., 124 Lyon ............................... 552-7280
Narcotics Anonymous ........................................................... 621-8600
National’ s Co., Alcoholism, 1049 Market #507 ............... 861-4000
Hearing Impaired TT ............................................................. 861-8630
Peter Claver Community (Residential) ................................. 563-9228
Tenderloin Deus ................................................................. 255-1786
Veteran’s Hospital (treatment only) ....................................... 255-1460
Walden House (residential) .................................................... 554-1450
Gay/Lesbian
Acceptance Place (Residential Treatment, Men) .................... 695-1708
Operation Recovery (Men), 1853 Market ............................. 626-7000
18th Street Services (Men), 271 Church ................................ 861-4898
Women
FACET (pregnant and post-partum) 1040 Geary .................... 928-7800
IRIS Project, 333 Valencia .................................................... 864-2364
Women Against Alcoholism Co., 2261 Bryant ..................... 282-9890
IVDU
Bay Area Addiction Recognition and Treatment
California Detoxification Programs
Townsend St. ........................................................................ 543-6256
Kapuna West Inner-City Child Family AIDS Net. .................... 963-9295
Walden House ..................................................................... 554-1450

SOCIAL SERVICES
AIDS Benefit Counselors ......................................................... 558-9845
AIDS Emergency Fund ........................................................... 441-6407
AIDS Indigent Direct Services ............................................... 441-2467
Bayview-Hunter’ s Point Foundation ....................................... 822-7500
Catholic Charities AIDS/ARC Services Div. ......................... 866-7440
E.A.C.H. (Early Advocacy & Care for HIV) ............................ 864-1214
Godfather Service Fund (Care packages for persons hospitalized with HIV) ......................................................... 563-4433
Instituto Familiar De La Raza, Mano A Mano ....................... 647-5450
Juan Alternativo/Salud, 496-8800
Instituto De Atencion a La Vida, 467-8800
Instituto de Poblacion Individualizada de Salud, 425-8800
Jovenes de Esperanza ............................................................ 921-8800
Leinster House, 484-8800
The Bridge-childecare for families living with HIV .................. 552-2437

LEGAL/ADVOCACY
ACLU Complaint Line ............................................................ 621-2488
ACT-Gay & Lesbian Task Force ............................................. 567-0744
ACT-UP Golden Gate Chapter ................................................ 252-9200
AIDS and Employment Proj. (Legal Aid Society) .................. 864-8848
AIDS Benefit Counselors ......................................................... 558-9845
AIDS Legal Referral Panel ..................................................... 291-4544
ARC/AIDS Vigil ................................................................. 431-9136
BAIL-Bay Area Lawyers for Indiv. Freedom ......................... 956-5764
California Fair Empl. & Housing ........................................... 557-2005
Gay Legal Referral Service .................................................... 621-3900
Mobilization Against AIDS ................................................... 863-4676
National Center for Lesbian Rights ........................................ 861-6074
Nat’l Gay Rights Advocates .................................................... 863-6342
SF, City of, Human Rights Commission ................................. 252-2500
US Office of Civil Rights ....................................................... 556-3505
A Brief Guide to

The HIV Antibody Test

At Alternative Test Sites
If you think you might be infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, you should think about taking

The HIV Antibody Test

The test is a blood test for antibodies to HIV. Your body usually makes antibodies to fight off disease. However, antibodies to HIV just show that you are infected.

Being infected is NOT the same thing as having AIDS. It means the virus is in your body and you could infect someone else, even if you feel fine.

Black, White, Latino, Native American, Asian, Male, Female, Young, Old, Middle-aged, Lesbian, Heterosexual, Gay, Bisexual, Immigrant, Native Born, Married, Living Together, Single, Rich, Poor, Middle Class, anyone...could be infected with HIV who:

• has had unsafe sex with an infected person, or
• has shared intravenous (I.V.) needles with an infected person without cleaning the needles.

HIV can also be spread from an infected mother to her unborn child while she is pregnant or when she gives birth, or to a newborn baby through breastfeeding.

*HIV—human immunodeficiency virus
Reasons to take the test:

• You think you may be infected and you want to know for sure so that you can go on to consider getting medical help, enrolling in drug trials, or taking alternative treatments.

• Knowing your antibody status will keep you from having unsafe sex and/or sharing needles.

• You are thinking about having a baby or breastfeeding your baby.

• You would feel less stress if you knew for certain whether you are infected.

Reasons not to take the test:

• You have never been at risk for HIV infection.

• You do not yet feel able to deal with the strong feelings that knowing your test result would bring up.

**Some people have been infected from blood transfusions, or blood products such as those for hemophilia. Since 1985, when blood screening began, this has been very rare.**
The HIV Antibody Test

is available in San Francisco at the Department of Public Health Alternative Test Sites (ATS)

The test is ANONYMOUS and FREE. Anonymous means you never give your name. No one—except you—can ever tell anyone else your result.

All services are FREE:
• education
• testing
• counseling
• referral

At the ATS, you will see a short video about AIDS and the antibody test. A health educator will answer any questions you have. If you decide not to take the test, you are free to leave. If you want to take the test, a nurse will draw blood from your arm.

You will come back in 2 weeks to get your result. A counselor will talk with you, in private, about what your result means. He or she can also tell you where to go for more support and information.

There are ATS in several neighborhoods. To make an appointment at the ATS that's most convenient for you, call (415) 621-4858.

You can also get an AIDS antibody test at your doctor's office or clinic. There, the test is confidential, not anonymous. The benefit of testing at your doctor's or clinic is that you can start monitoring and/or treatment earlier if you test positive. But there may be problems if you apply for life insurance or disability insurance. You could be discriminated against, no matter what your result.

You can ask your doctor to keep your test result in a separate file to protect your privacy. In order to provide better care, your doctor may inform another medical provider of your result. Your doctor may also inform your spouse.
When you take the HIV Antibody Test you will receive a positive or a negative result.

A positive result means:
1. Antibodies to HIV were found in your blood.
2. Your blood sample was tested 4 times in order to make sure of the result, if you were tested at the ATS. (Testing procedures may be different at other sites.)
3. You can infect someone else by having unsafe sex or blood-to-blood contact (such as sharing IV needles).

If you test positive:
You should never have unsafe sex or share IV needles. Even if you feel healthy, you can infect someone else.

If you are pregnant, you could pass HIV on to your unborn child. You could also pass HIV on through breastfeeding.

You may develop AIDS. No one can tell exactly when you will get sick or if you will get sick. But studies show that the risk of getting sick increases over time. It can take 5 years or longer for AIDS to develop.

Your ATS counselor will talk with you about your next step. It may be to:
• Get under the care of an AIDS-knowledgeable doctor
• Discuss immune system monitoring tests and possible treatment with your doctor
• Decide whether to inform others about your test result
• Learn more about HIV infection and available resources
• Join a support group to reduce fear and stress
A negative result means:

1. Antibodies to HIV were not found in your blood.

2. Either you are not infected with HIV or you became infected recently.

You may not have waited long enough for antibodies to show up on the test.

People make antibodies within 6 months after they are infected.

For the most accurate result, you need to be tested at least six months after you last had unsafe sex or shared I.V. needles.

Don't have unsafe sex or share needles while you're waiting to be tested. The test is not a substitute for having safe sex or cleaning needles.

Whether you are positive or negative, don't have unsafe sex.

Unsafe sex means letting someone else's blood, semen or vaginal fluid get into your body.

Unsafe sex also means getting your blood, semen, or vaginal fluid into someone else's body.

Use condoms when you have sex.

If you use drugs, there are many agencies where you can get help to quit.

Never share I.V. needles. If you must share needles, clean them with bleach. Fill the syringe with bleach. Empty it. Fill it with bleach again, and empty it again. Then fill and empty twice with water.

Condoms, latex dams*, and bleach are free at the ATS.

*Latex dams (also called dental dams) are thin rubber squares used for safe oral sex on a woman.
Questions & Answers

Q: My partner and I both tested positive. Can we have unsafe sex with each other?

A: No. If you have unsafe sex, you could reinfect each other. You may increase your risk of developing AIDS.

Q: My partner and I both tested negative. Can we have unsafe sex with each other?

A: No, unless you both tested negative at least six months after you last had unsafe sex or shared I.V. needles and all of the following also are true:

1. You have sex only with each other or never have unsafe sex with other people.

2. Neither of you shares I.V. needles.

3. You both understand that you must be honest with each other.

If you have any doubts, don’t have unsafe sex.

Testing antibody-negative does not mean you are immune to HIV. No one is immune to HIV.

Q. My partner doesn’t want to get tested. What should I do?

A. Don’t have unsafe sex. Don’t share I.V. needles.
TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO TAKE THE TEST...call the ATS:
(415) 621-4858 (English/Spanish)

TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TEST...

TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT THE TEST...

TO TALK TO SOMEONE WHILE YOU’RE WAITING FOR YOUR TEST RESULT...CALL:

San Francisco AIDS Foundation Hotline
Information and referrals in English or Spanish

(415) 863-AIDS in San Francisco

(800) FOR AIDS in Northern California

(800) FIL AIDS Filipino in Northern California

(415) 864-6606 TDD (for hearing impaired only)

The Spanish-language Hotline is co-sponsored by the Latino AIDS Project. Partial funding for the Spanish-language Hotline provided by Pacific Telesis.

AIDS Health Project
Support groups and individual health consultations
476-6430

Community Mental Health Services
Counseling and referrals
255-3440

Drug Hotline
Treatment referrals and emotional support
752-3400

Funding provided by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the State of California Department of Health Services, and foundation, corporate, and individual donations.
TESTING FOR AIDS
THE RISK OF ACQUIRING AIDS

Five groups of individuals are at risk of being infected with the virus which causes AIDS:

— Hemophiliacs and other individuals who received transfusions or other blood products between 1978 and 1985. HIV antibody testing of all blood products was introduced in early 1985 and has greatly reduced the likelihood of exposure to AIDS-infected blood.

— Individuals who share drug needles and syringes with someone who is infected.

— Individuals who have sex with someone who is infected.

— Individuals who have numerous sex partners, and cannot know whether a partner is likely to be infected. Any exchange of infected blood, semen or vaginal fluids can spread the virus and place such individuals at risk.

— Infants of infected mothers.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT ANTIBODY TO THE AIDS VIRUS

What is HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Antibody?

Antibodies are produced by the body to help "fight off" infection. Different antibodies are produced for each type of infection, such as influenza, measles and mumps. If someone is infected with the AIDS virus (HIV), the body makes antibodies to HIV. Unfortunately, these antibodies do not kill all the AIDS virus in the body.
What does a positive antibody test mean?

The presence of antibodies to HIV indicates infection with the AIDS virus at some time in the past. A positive test DOES NOT mean a person has AIDS, NOR does it mean that a person is certain to develop AIDS. A positive test DOES NOT mean a person is "immune" to HIV or AIDS. A negative does not mean that a person at risk may not acquire HIV at some future date. A positive test DOES mean that the infected person could pass this virus on to others by donating blood, by sharing needles, through sexual activity, or to the unborn fetus or the breast-feeding infant.

Why Be Tested?

— If you are concerned about the possibility that you have become infected with the AIDS virus, and your last potential exposure was at least six months prior to testing, a negative test will provide assurance that infection has not occurred. Although it can become positive as early as six weeks after exposure, the antibody test usually becomes positive within six months of exposure.

— The Public Health Service (PHS) recommends that sexually active persons at risk for AIDS infection be tested so that those positive for the virus can take appropriate precautions to protect their sexual partner(s).

— The PHS also recommends that a woman of childbearing age (usually considered ages 15 to 44) who has
identifiable risks for HIV infection and is not taking contraceptives be tested for antibody to the AIDS virus, because the risk of transmission of the AIDS virus from a mother to her fetus or newborn infant is very high.

— Learning that you have become infected may allow you to seek appropriate preventive medical care earlier than you would otherwise do so.

Are There Any Reasons to Avoid Testing?

— A person who is extremely concerned about the possibility of having been infected by the AIDS virus must consider whether he or she can emotionally tolerate the knowledge if the test is positive. The burden of knowing that you are infected, however, must be balanced against your responsibility to a sexual partner or to an unborn infant.

— A small number of people do not have a positive test despite actually being infected, although the test does detect 98-99% of infected individuals.

— The Medical Center will make every effort to avoid disclosing the results of your test without your written agreement. Should others learn that you have a positive result, however, experience has shown that you may be denied life insurance and/or health insurance, you may have difficulties at your job, and your children may be rejected by schools and playmates.

— It has been suggested, although not proven, that even having the test at all
may lead others to think that you are at risk of acquiring AIDS. It may therefore be advisable not to discuss your decision to be tested for antibody to the AIDS virus with others.

— Because of the confidentiality issue, the Medical Center has devised a means of payment for the test that avoids direct billing to the insurance carrier.

BEING TESTED FOR EXPOSURE TO THE AIDS VIRUS

The laboratory will perform a test for exposure to the AIDS virus only upon the order of a physician or other authorized practitioner. The physician’s order must be accompanied by the form entitled "Patient Consent to AIDS Testing and Disclosure"; the physician must sign the top portion of this form to verify having informed and counseled you about the test and obtained your consent.

If you wish to be tested, you must sign and date the bottom section of the form entitled "Patient Consent to AIDS Testing and Disclosure".

IF YOU WISH TO MAXIMIZE CONFIDENTIALITY, YOU MAY CHOOSE TO PAY FOR THIS TESTING YOURSELF AND NOT HAVE THE BILL SENT TO YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY. MARK YOUR CHOICE OF BILLING PROCEDURE ON THE CONSENT FORM.

Bring the consent form to the laboratory station on the first floor of the Ambulatory Care Center, 400 Parnassus Ave., in Room A 122 (see location below).
If you have indicated on the consent form that you do NOT want your insurance company billed for the HIV testing, you will be given a billing slip at the laboratory window and will be directed to the Cashier to pay for the testing prior to your blood being drawn.

The results of the test will be sent to your physician within one week.
This guide talks about how the HIV antibody test works, why you should consider taking it, and how to protect yourself in the future.

WHAT IS THE HIV ANTIBODY TEST?

It is a blood test that shows if a person has been infected with HIV, human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS. To do this, the test looks for antibodies to HIV in the blood. Antibodies are proteins that the body forms when foreign substances get into the bloodstream. The test is also sometimes called the AIDS antibody test.

ARE ANTIBODIES TO HIV DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ANTIBODIES?

At first, antibodies to HIV fight off disease like other antibodies. But over time, the body cannot make enough of them and they stop working. They are still useful to show that someone has been infected with HIV.
WHO MAY BE INFECTED WITH HIV?

Anyone may be infected with HIV through sexual activity, blood contact, or both. What a person does causes infection, not his or her sex, race, color, age, sexual orientation, social class, or marital status.

HOW DOES SEX SPREAD HIV?

HIV is present in blood, semen, and vaginal fluid. HIV is spread through sex when blood, semen, or vaginal fluid from one person enters the body of another.

In the United States, most people with AIDS are gay men. Many gay and bisexual men became infected in the early years of the epidemic before anyone knew about AIDS. Anal sex without a condom is the most risky sexual activity.

Heterosexual sex can also spread HIV. The two most risky sexual activities are anal and vaginal sex without a condom. A man can get HIV from a woman, and a woman can get HIV from a man.

Oral sex can also spread HIV although the risk is much less than vaginal or anal sex. Oral sex is low risk, but is not "no risk."

A special category of sexual contact is sexual assault. In most cases, the assaulted man or
woman does not know if the assailant was infected with HIV. Anyone who has been sexually assaulted should discuss his or her possible risk with a trained counselor or health worker.

**HOW DOES BLOOD CONTACT SPREAD HIV?**

*If* infected blood from one person gets into someone else's body, the blood can spread HIV.

*Most* people who have been infected through blood contact have shared needles to inject drugs into their veins, muscles, or under the skin. Anyone who has shared needles since 1978, without cleaning them, may have been infected. (1978 is when HIV first appeared in the U.S.)

*People* with hemophilia and other blood disorders (almost all of whom are men) who have used blood products for their disorders between 1978 and 1984 are also at risk for HIV. Many hemophiliacs became infected because of the way that blood products for hemophilia are made. They are pooled from many donors and could spread HIV if even one of the donors were HIV-infected. Beginning in October 1984, heat treatment for blood products virtually eliminated further risk.

Anyone who received a blood transfusion or other blood products between 1978 and 1985 in the United States may also be at some small risk. Today the chances of becoming HIV-infected
through a blood transfusion are extremely low due to blood screening and heat treatment.

A person who received a transfusion or medical injection, outside the U.S., between 1978 and the present may be at risk if blood screening and/or sterile techniques were not used. The risk will vary depending on the rates of infection in the particular country. Anyone who has questions about risk for these reasons should speak to a trained health worker.

A health worker may be at risk through blood-to-blood contact which is job-related, though the risk is very low. The risk is reduced by using proper infection control procedures such as universal blood and body fluid precautions and proper handling of needles. Even if procedures are being followed, accidents happen. Anyone who gets a needle stick or other type of blood exposure should report this to a supervisor immediately and consult with a trained health worker.

HOW DO BABIES GET INFECTED WITH HIV?

A n HIV-infected woman may give HIV to her unborn baby while she is pregnant or when she gives birth. She may also give HIV to her baby through breastfeeding.
WHAT KIND OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY IS SAFE?

Whether a person is positive or negative, whether or not a person decides to take the test, he or she should follow the safe sex guidelines.

Safe sex means making sure that one's blood, semen, or vaginal fluid does not enter someone else's body; safe sex also means not letting someone else's blood, semen, or vaginal fluid enter one's own body.

Latex condoms can prevent the spread of HIV. They are not 100% safe, but when used properly, they are very effective. Condoms break because there is air inside them or because the wrong lubricant is used. To keep air out, it is important to hold the tip of the condom when unrolling it. Only water-based lubricants should be used with condoms: K-Y jelly or sexual lubricants. Contraceptive jellies, creams, and foam add extra protection because they contain nonoxynol-9, a spermicide which kills HIV. Contraceptives should be used in addition to condoms, not instead of them. Oil-based lubricants such as Vaseline, massage oil, baby oil, and hand cream should never be used because they will make condoms break.

Condoms can be used for oral sex on a man. Dental dams can be used for oral sex on a woman. Dental dams are thin latex squares, large enough to cover the genital area. Dental supply stores sell them.
Anyone in a relationship in which there is risk of infection with HIV should practice safe sex, even if the couple has had unsafe sex before. HIV infection may still be prevented.

If both partners are infected with HIV, they should practice safe sex. It is possible that they could re-infect each other. Re-infection may increase their chances of developing AIDS.

If two people have taken the HIV antibody test six months after they may have been exposed to HIV, and both receive negative test results, they should still continue to practice safe sex unless there is absolutely no risk of infection. This means that the couple does not ever have sex with anyone else, or practices only safe sex outside of the relationship. It also means that neither partner ever uses IV drugs, or, if they do, never shares needles without cleaning the needles with bleach.

It may be difficult to be completely honest with a partner about sex and drug use. Anyone with any doubt should continue to practice safe sex.

**DRUGS AND NEEDLE CLEANING**

Drugs, including alcohol, are not healthy for the body. Drugs can spread HIV directly when people share needles. Using drugs also means that the immune system will not be working at its best. The body will be less able to fight off any infection,
including HIV infection. Finally, drugs affect a person's judgment. A person who is high on IV drugs, other non-prescription drugs, or alcohol is more likely not to practice safe sex and could become infected with HIV.

There are many agencies and programs that offer help to quit. If a person is using drugs, or waiting to get into a treatment program, it is important not to share needles. Then HIV cannot be passed from one person to another. But if a person must share needles, the needles should be cleaned with bleach before each use.

To clean needles, put the syringe into a glass of household bleach and fill. Empty. Fill with bleach and empty again. Then fill the syringe with water, and empty. Fill with water and empty again. Do not drink or shoot the bleach.

**IF A PERSON MAY HAVE BEEN INFECTED WITH HIV, SHOULD HE OR SHE TAKE THE HIV ANTIBODY TEST?**

It is up to each person to decide to take, or not take, the antibody test. A person at risk should consider taking the test. He or she should do an honest personal risk assessment. (Your local AIDS hotline is a good resource for help.)
WHAT ARE REASONS TO TAKE THE TEST?

A person who is infected can start making medical choices. With the help of an AIDS-knowledgeable doctor, a person can gather information about standard and experimental treatment and discuss options with his or her doctor. Some preventive treatments are available to prolong life and preserve quality of life. For example, AZT has been proven effective in slowing down the progression of HIV infection. Aerosol pentamidine can prevent pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, a rare kind of pneumonia that is the most common cause of death for people with AIDS. Since these treatments can be taken before becoming ill, it is crucial to find out early about HIV infection.

Another reason to take the test is to reinforce safe sex. A person who tests HIV-positive has a very strong motivation to practice only safe sex. People infected with HIV who have acted responsibly have helped greatly to limit the spread of HIV. Similarly, an HIV-negative person has a strong reason to stay uninfected. Whether HIV-positive or -negative, it is important to practice safe sex and keep drug needles clean.

If a woman is thinking about having a baby or breastfeeding her baby, the test will give her
important information. An HIV-infected woman has about a 30-50% chance of giving birth to an HIV-infected baby, more so if she has already given birth to an infected baby. An HIV-infected man who wants to become a father must realize that he may infect his partner and future children.

Taking the test may lower stress. Knowing HIV status may be less stressful than not knowing.

A person may have many feelings about the HIV antibody test: fear, relief, sadness, guilt, and hope. There are many counselors and support groups who can help a person to talk about these feelings, and to decide if it makes sense to take the antibody test.

WHEN SHOULD THE TEST BE TAKEN?

Everyone has a personal timetable for deciding to take the test. A person may have decided not to take the test in the past, but reconsider based on new information. It may make sense to delay taking the test during especially stressful times, such as the end of the school semester, during holidays, etc.

It is best to take the HIV antibody test at least six months after the last possible exposure to HIV. Almost all people develop antibodies within 6 months, although there are rare cases
of people who take longer. A negative result within the first few months after having unsafe sex or sharing used needles may only mean that the body has not had time to develop antibodies.

WHERE SHOULD THE TEST BE TAKEN?

The antibody test is available at many hospitals, clinics and private physicians.

Make sure your test is free and anonymous. Names are never used. Results can never be given to any person or agency except to the person taking the test. The test site usually provides free education, counseling, and referrals.

The advantage to taking the test at a private doctor's office or clinic is that if the result is positive, the doctor can immediately start treatment or monitoring. However, when the test is not anonymous, there may be problems with applying for life insurance or disability insurance. People have been discriminated against, no matter what the result of the test.

Physicians can keep the test result in a separate file to protect privacy and help insure confidentiality. In California, physicians must
receive permission to release antibody test results separate from permission to release the general medical file. This permission may be written or verbal. However, the physician may, without consent, inform another medical provider or may inform any person whom the physician reasonably believes may be a sexual or needle-sharing partner.

**HOW DOES SOMEONE CONTACT THE TEST SITES?**

**Call** your local AIDS agency for the phone numbers of test sites nearest you. The person calling is given a code (for example, SF 99). Anyone needing translation services, including sign language, should tell the clerk when making the appointment.

**At** the test site, each person checks in, using the code. An educational video is shown, in small groups, which explains the antibody test. A health educator answers any questions about the test or related subjects such as safe sex. Anyone is free to leave without taking the test.

**Each** person who wants to take the test has blood drawn in private. He or she makes an appointment, using the same code, to get results in two weeks.

**The** two-week waiting period can be stressful. Counselors can help people think about friends
or community resources they could call, or activities that would help reduce stress.

Results are either positive or negative. (A very small number of tests may be “indeterminate” and need to be done again.) Results are given in private by a trained counselor. The counselor makes sure that the person understands the test results, and safe sex and safe needle use. The counselor also gives any needed referrals to support groups, community agencies, medical care, and other services.

**WHAT DOES A POSITIVE RESULT MEAN?**

A positive result means that antibodies to HIV were found in the blood. It indicates that the person has been infected with HIV. The test *cannot predict if or when* a person will go on to develop symptoms of AIDS. An HIV-infected person, also called an antibody-positive person, can infect other people through sexual contact, or blood to blood contact.

An antibody-positive person should *never* have unsafe sex, and should *never* share needles without cleaning them with bleach. An antibody-positive person should *never* donate blood, plasma, semen, or organs.
An antibody-positive woman who is considering having a baby should discuss her situation and options with a trained health worker. If a woman is pregnant, she should seek care immediately from an AIDS-knowledgeable doctor.

Your counselor will outline possible early intervention steps for the antibody-positive person. It is strongly recommended to get under the care of an AIDS-knowledgeable doctor as soon as possible. Any symptoms which develop will receive immediate attention. It is important not to ignore symptoms.

Symptoms which may be HIV-related include shortness of breath, being tired all the time, a dry cough, pink or purple or brown spots on the skin, diarrhea, loss of appetite, weight loss, night sweats, chills, fever, and white spots in the mouth. The symptoms generally will be persistent and will last for weeks and months. Since there may be other reasons for these symptoms (including anxiety), it is important to consult a doctor.

Under a doctor’s care, an antibody-positive person can be closely followed. Laboratory tests used to monitor the HIV-positive person include:
T-cell (CD4) count, which looks at the number and percentage of T-helper cells, an important part of the immune system; p24 antigen test, which measures the amount of p24 core protein in the blood; and Beta-2 microglobulin test, which measures the amount of this protein. Looking at these measures of the immune system over time, a doctor can assess health and better recommend treatment.

Treatment options include established treatments such as AZT (also known as zidovudine) and aerosol pentamidine, or experimental treatments, or trials. (For information on experimental treatments, see BETA, the Bulletin of Experimental Treatments for AIDS, published by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. It may be ordered through the San Francisco AIDS Foundation Hotline.)

A seropositive person may also want to consider who to tell. Sexual partners and needle-sharing partners may or may not already be aware of their risk, and may or may not be practicing safe sex and safe needle use. Your counselor can help a person to figure out who to tell and how to tell them. Your local Department of Public Health may also assist, upon request, in informing partners of their risk, without using the name of the antibody-positive person.
The counselor will also ask about the support that the antibody-positive person has from friends, lovers, religious groups, family, work, neighbors, and make suggestions for groups and other ways to get help and resources.

Someone who is antibody-positive may never develop AIDS. Some people have been infected for years, and still feel fine. Studies show, however, that more and more people will become sick over time. There are no clear reasons yet why one person gets sick, and another doesn’t. Good health habits (such as sleeping enough, eating a variety of low-fat and vitamin-rich food, not smoking or drinking alcohol or using drugs, exercising regularly, and having supportive friends) may help.

WHAT DOES A NEGATIVE RESULT MEAN?

A negative result means that no antibodies to HIV were found in the blood. This means that either the person is not infected with HIV, or that antibodies have not had time to develop.

Since antibodies can take up to six months to develop, it is best to take the test six months after the last risky behavior. (A very small percentage of people may take longer or may never develop antibodies even though they are infected with HIV.)
In order for the test to be meaningful, a person should follow safe sex and safe needle use guidelines while waiting to take the test.

**IS IT POSSIBLE FOR TEST RESULTS TO BE WRONG?**

It is very, very unlikely, for test results to be wrong, if the person has waited six months from the last unsafe sex or needle use so the body has enough time to make antibodies.

Though no test can be guaranteed 100%, the current antibody tests are accurate.

Funding provided by the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the State of California Department of Health Services, and foundation, corporate, and individual donations.
AIDS ANTIBODY TESTING

at

Alternative Test Sites

A Program of the San Francisco Department of Public Health

Information to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to take the test.
Introducing the AIDS ANTIBODY TEST at Alternative Test Sites in San Francisco

The AIDS ANTIBODY TEST is available free of charge at Alternative Test Sites in San Francisco. This is a program of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. The AIDS antibody test detects the presence of antibodies to the AIDS virus by using a simple blood test.

This is not a test for AIDS. The test does not tell you if you have AIDS or any AIDS Related Condition (ARC); it does show whether you have been infected with the virus which can cause AIDS.

Infection means that a virus has been retained in your body. If you are infected with the AIDS virus, your body will produce antibodies, which can be identified by the AIDS antibody test. You cannot be infected by casual contact with the virus. Infection can only occur through intimate sexual contact, or passage of contaminated blood in the body (such as occurs among people sharing needles), or from an infected mother to her fetus.

Many people are concerned that they might face insurance or employment discrimination if the result of their test were revealed. Although the test is available at other locations, your anonymity is guaranteed if you take the test at an Alternative Test Site. You can get test results at Alternative Test Sites in San Francisco without revealing your personal identity.

Your decision whether or not to take this test may be a difficult one. You must decide for yourself. This publication provides information to help you make an informed decision. If you have questions which are not answered here or at the Alternative Test Site, contact the Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights (415-673-3189) or the San Francisco Medical Society (415-567-6234) for referral to a physician knowledgeable about AIDS, or call the San Francisco AIDS Foundation Hotline (415-863-AIDS).
Test Procedure

At Alternative Test Sites

Anonymity is built into the Alternative Test Site system. You do not give your name, address, social security number or other official identification numbers.

To take the test at an Alternative Test Site you need to make an appointment by telephone (call 415-621-4858). In San Francisco, the Alternative Test Sites are located at several SFPDH Health Centers. The visit will take approximately one hour. You will need to return to the Alternative Test Site in person two weeks later to get your test result. The test and all education, counseling and referral services are free at Alternative Test Sites.

When you call to make an appointment for testing, an operator will give you an appointment number. This number cannot be traced back to you. When you go to the Alternative Test Site you will be given further information about the test. Afterwards, if you decide not to take the test, you may leave. If you decide to take the test, you will be given a new number to identify your blood sample. This number does not reveal your personal identity.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality is an agreement that information about you will not be disclosed without your consent. Anonymity is a condition in which your personal identity is unknown to others. Your anonymity is guaranteed if you are tested at an Alternative Test Site. If you take the test anywhere else, your anonymity may not be guaranteed, except in some research programs.

In two weeks you will return to the test site to get your test result. Upon presentation of your number, a health counselor will give you your test results and explain them to you in private. You will also receive a referral list in case you wish further attention.

If you want counseling after you take the test but before getting results, contact Community Mental Health Services (415-558-4387).
Should I Take the Test?

Before you decide to take the test, stop for a moment to consider how you would feel if you received a positive result and how you would feel if you received a negative result. If you believe that you may be emotionally overwhelmed, you may not want to take the test.

The following people should consider taking the test:

- People who want to know if they have been infected with the AIDS virus.
- People who want to know if they can transmit the AIDS virus to someone else.
- People considering pregnancy if one or both partners might be at risk for AIDS.
- People who want information that can reinforce safe, healthful behavior.

People who do not want to know the result should not take the test. People who feel unwilling or unable to cope with the implications of the result should not take the test.

The test will not tell you:

- if you have AIDS or an AIDS Related Condition (ARC).
- if you will develop AIDS or ARC in the future.
- if you are immune to AIDS OR ARC.
- if you are healthy.

Whether or not you take the test, if you think you may be at risk for AIDS, you should not engage in practices which can transmit the AIDS virus.
Test Results
And What They Mean

The AIDS antibody is a protein naturally produced in the body in response to the presence of the AIDS virus. The virus is called by several names, most commonly HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus).

A positive test result indicates that the antibody has been found in your blood. A negative test result indicates that the antibody has not been found in your blood. The test is not completely accurate. A very small percentage of people tested may be told that they have been infected by the virus when in fact they have not. In addition, a small percentage of people will receive a negative test result when in fact they have been infected with the virus.

A Positive Test Result

If you test positive it does mean:
► Your blood sample has been tested more than once and the tests indicate that antibodies to the AIDS virus are present.
► You have been infected with the AIDS virus and your body has produced antibodies.
► Researchers have shown that most people with AIDS antibodies have active virus in their bodies. Therefore, assume you are contagious and capable of passing the virus on to others.

If you test positive it does not mean:
► That you necessarily have AIDS or an AIDS Related Condition (ARC).
► That you will necessarily get AIDS or ARC. (You can reduce your chance of getting AIDS by avoiding further contact with the virus and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.)
► That you are immune to AIDS.

Therefore, if you test positive:
► Protect yourself from any further infection.
► Protect others from the virus by following AIDS precautions. (Use condoms in all risk situations; Do not share needles).
► Consult a physician for a complete health evaluation and advice on health maintenance.
► To improve your chances of staying healthy, avoid drugs and heavy alcohol use, maintain good nutrition, and avoid fatigue and stress.
► Do not donate blood, plasma, sperm, body organs or other tissue.
A Negative Test Result

If you test negative it means that no antibodies to the AIDS virus have been found in your blood at this time. There are three possible explanations for this:

► You have not been infected with the virus.
► You have had contact with the virus but have not become infected. However, repeated exposure to the AIDS virus will increase the likelihood that you will become infected.
► You have been infected by the virus but have not yet produced antibodies. (Research indicates most people will produce antibodies within 2-8 weeks after infection. Some people will not produce antibodies for six months or more. A very small number of people will never produce antibodies).

If you test negative it does not mean:

► That you have nothing to worry about. The AIDS epidemic has not yet peaked.
► That you are immune to the virus.
► That you have not been infected with the virus. (You may have been infected and not yet produced antibodies).

How Is AIDS Transmitted?

AIDS is transmitted from person to person most commonly through sexual contact in the same manner as other sexually transmitted diseases or through direct blood to blood contact such as via shared needles. It is NOT transmitted through casual contact such as close proximity, sneezing or touching.

What Groups Are Known To Be at Risk for AIDS?

• Gay and bisexual men
• Intravenous drug users
• Hemophiliacs
• Women or men who have had unsafe sexual contact or have shared needles with someone infected with the AIDS virus.
• Babies born to parents in any of the above groups.
• People who received blood transfusions between 1979 and 1985 have a very slight risk of infection.
**In summary:**

*If you are currently healthy and you test positive:*

► You will not necessarily develop AIDS or ARC.
► You can increase your chances of staying healthy.
► You are probably contagious and can spread the virus to others through sexual contact, blood donation, shared needles or pregnancy (to the unborn child).

*If you are currently healthy and test negative:*

► You are not protected from future infection or illness.
► You are probably free of the AIDS virus. If you have doubts about having yet produced antibodies, avoid contact with the virus, wait six months and be re-tested.

**Whether you test positive or negative:**

► Be careful. Don’t contract or transmit the virus.
   Avoid unsafe sex in all risk situations.
   Do not share needles.

► If you have any symptoms of AIDS or ARC, consult a physician or visit an AIDS screening clinic.

► We urge everyone to maintain adequate health insurance.

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**Recommendations for Avoiding Transmission of the AIDS Virus**

Males and females, heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual, may acquire or transmit AIDS through intimate sexual contact. When used properly, condoms stop the AIDS virus. In risk situations, no one should allow their semen, blood, urine, feces or vaginal secretions to enter the body of another person. Personal implements such as razors and toothbrushes that could become contaminated with blood should not be shared.
If you decide to take the test in San Francisco, telephone 415-621-4858 to make an appointment. For Alternative Test Site locations outside San Francisco, call the AIDS Hotline at 415-863-AIDS or 800-FOR-AIDS (in Northern California), or 800-922-AIDS (in Southern California).

To receive an individualized health consultation or to participate in a support group, call the AIDS Health Project at 415-476-6430.

For further information about AIDS, contact the San Francisco AIDS Foundation Hotline (415-863-AIDS), or contact Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights (415-558-9353) or the San Francisco Medical Society (415-567-6234) for a referral to a physician knowledgeable about AIDS.

The information provided in these pages has been compiled by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation under contract from the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

Published June, 1985

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Revised, 1987

What happens when you become infected with the AIDS virus?

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, a disease caused by a virus which breaks down a part of the body’s immune system. This breakdown leaves the body vulnerable to a variety of unusual infections. Not everyone infected with the virus will develop AIDS. There are several possibilities:

• Some infected people will remain healthy. They will display none of the symptoms of AIDS. Research indicates that people in this group can transmit the virus to others by shared needles or unsafe sexual contact. The long term effect of infection in healthy, antibody-positive people is not known.

• Many people who are antibody-positive will develop AIDS Related Condition (ARC). They may exhibit mild to severe symptoms such as swollen lymph nodes, unexplained, persistent diarrhea, unintentional weight loss, mild or intermittent fever, drenching night sweats, fatigue, and/or yeast and fungus infections.

• An unknown percentage of antibody-positive people will develop AIDS. A diagnosis of AIDS is made only after finding specific life-threatening infections or malignancies that do not normally occur in healthy people. The two most common diseases associated with AIDS are Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP) and Kaposi’s sarcoma (KS).
### GENERAL POPULATION

**San Francisco**
- SF AIDS Foundation Hotline: 863-4IDS
- Toll Free: (800) 4OR-AIDS
- Tagalog: 1-800-255-3060
- Hearing Impaired TTD: 864-6606

**AIDS/HIV Hotline**
- Weeknights 9pm-1am; Weekends 5pm-1am: 688-AIDS
- AIDS Health Project: 476-6430
- AIDS Indigent Direct Services: 441-2467
- AIDS Information BBS: Voice 626-1245
- (Computer Bulletin Board): Modern 626-1246
- BAPHR-Bay Area Phys. Human Rights: 585-9353
- Physician Referral: 673-5189
- Calif. Medical Assoc. Task Force: 882-5186
- Childcare Resource and Referral Network: 661-1714
- Forensic AIDS Pyl. (Prison Inmates/Ex-Inmates): 863-8237
- Heights-Asbury Switchboard: 431-1714
- Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt: 863-5511
- Narl. AIDS Hotline: (800) 342-AIDS
- Hearing Impaired: (800) AIDS-TTY
- Spanish: (800) 344-SIDA
- People with AIDS/ARC Switchboard: 861-7309
- Project Inform: 558-9051
- Toll Free: (800) 334-7422
- SF City, Dept. Publ. Health AIDS Office: 554-9000
- Sex Information, Hotline: 621-7300
- SF Medical Society: 567-2630
- SF Suicide Prevention: 567-1423
- Drug Information: 752-3400
- Mental Health Info & Referral: 387-5100
- Tenderloin AIDS Network: 989-6097
- Third World AIDS Advisory Task Force: 647-7655

**East Bay**
- AIDS Education Project: 642-5507
- AIDS Minority Hlh. Initiative: 763-1872
- AIDS Project of the East Bay: 834-8181
- Alameda Co. AIDS Office: 286-2639
- Asian Health Services AIDS Educ. Project: 444-AIDS
- East Bay AIDS Center: 540-1870
- East Bay Asian AIDS Coordinating Comm: 444-AIDS
- East Bay Women's AIDS Network: 286-2559
- Lesbian/Gay Switchboard Pacific Center: 841-6224
- Pacific Center (Sexual Minorities): 548-8283

### SPECIAL POPULATIONS

**American Indian**
- American Indian AIDS Institute: 626-7639

**Gay American Indian, AIDS Outreach Prog**: 441-0565

**African-American**
- African American Men's Health Project: 597-9137
- Bayview-Hunter's Pt. Fedn, 6025 Third St: 822-7500
- Black and White-Men of All Colors Together: 261-7922
- Black on AIDS, 6025 Third St: 553-8427
- Kapuna West Inner-City Child/Family AIDS Net.: 863-0925
- Narl Task Force/AIDS Prev (Black/Latino Gay): 255-8378
- Westside AIDS Case Management: 431-9000

**Asian & Pacific Islanders**
- Asian AIDS Project (Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka): 300 4th St, #01: 227-0946
- Asian Pacific AIDS Coalition: 227-0946
- Black and White-Men of All Colors Together: 261-7922
- Ctr. for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement (Cevn., Mond., Laoctian, Viet., Camb.: 875 OFarrell: 883-7434
- Filipino Task Force on AIDS: 541-0866
- Gay Asian/Pacific Alliance Comm. HIV Project: 541-0237
- Japanese Comm Youth Co. (Japanese): 1596 Post: 563-1717
- Korean Comm. Svce, Ctr. (Korean): 3136 Fulton: 751-4190
- Filipino AIDS Education Project: 882-9291
- SFAP Tagalog AIDS HOTLINE: 1-800-255-3060

**Caregivers/Family Members**
- Family Survival Project: 434-3388
- Family AIDS Support Network (FANS): 992-3725
- Kairoos, Caregivers Support: 861-8077
- Shanti Project: 777-2273

**Gay/Lesbian**
- Lesbian/Gay Switchboard, Pacfic Center: 841-6224
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays: 928-2748

**Deaf/Hearing Impaired**
- AIDS Hotline (SF AIDS Foundation): (TD)864-6606
- Catholic Charities Hearing Imp. Pragn: (TD)567-0450
- Narl. AIDS Hotline: (800) AIDS-TTY
- Narl. Co. Alcoholism: 861-8760
- SF DPH Hlth Ctr #2 Deaf Services: (TD)929-7384
- SF Public Library Deaf Services Dept: (TD)358-3135
- Shanti Project: (TD)495-7495
- St. Benedicts Deaf AIDS Center: (TD)436-8372
- UC Center on Deafness: (TD)476-7600

### Latino/Spanish Speaking
- Hotline - National: (800) 344-SIDA
- Hotline - Northern Calif: (800) FOR-AIDS
- Hotline - San Francisco: 863-AIDS
- SFAP, Bilingual Svcs., 25 Van Ness: 864-5855, x 2519
- Latino AIDS Project: 647-5450
- Narl Task Force/AIDS Prev (Black/Latino Gay): 255-8378

**Sex Industry Workers**
- Project AWARE: 476-4091
- Cal PEP: 558-0450

**Youth**
- AIDS Education for Youth: 241-6220
- Children's Quilt Project: 548-3843
- Ctr. for Special Problems, 1700 Jackson: 558-4801
- Larkin St. Youth Center, 1040 Larkin: 673-0911
- Teen Clinic, SFGH, 1001 Potom: 821-8376

**Women**
- AIDS Health Project: 476-6430
- IRIS Project, 333 Valencia: 864-2364
- Lyon-Martin Clinic, 2480 Mission #214: 641-0220
- Project Aware: 476-4091
- SF AIDS Fdnm, Women's Program: 864-4376
- Shanti Project: 777-2273
- Women's AIDS Network: 227-5039
- Women's Inst.of Mental Health, 333 Valencia: 864-2364

### AIDS Information Hotline
- In San Francisco: 863-AIDS
- Toll Free: (800) FOR-AIDS
- Hearing Impaired: 864-6606

### AIDS Health Project

**Spring/Summer 1990**

**HIV Antibody Testing**

**RESOURCES**

- Medical Services, Crisis Intervention, Peer Support and Counseling, Social Services, Legal Advice, and More
- A Program of the San Francisco Department of Public Health
- Compiled by the AIDS Health Project

**For a Test Appointment**
- 621-4858