

SUNDAY MORNING Health Corner

The Importance of HIV Testing

Disparities in HIV care and treatment can be partly attributed to stigma and mistrust around the virus. Getting tested is the only way to find out if you have HIV or not. If you know if you have HIV, you can make decisions that will help you stay healthy.

What is HIV?

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system by weakening cells that fight disease and infection. When left untreated, HIV can lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Currently, there is no cure for HIV or AIDS. However, people with HIV can live long, healthy lives with proper medical treatment

How do I test for HIV?

As part of your regular health care, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that anyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested at least once for HIV.

There are three types of HIV tests:

 **Nucleic Acid Test (NAT)**
Antigen/Antibody Test
Antibody Test

Self-tests for HIV are a great way to find out whether or not you have HIV on your own time and in your very own space. The HIV test is free, quick, and private.

Two kinds of HIV self-tests are also available:

 **Rapid Self-Test**
Mail-In Self-Test

HIV tests are typically performed by drawing blood or through oral swabbing.

Be sure to talk to your health care provider about what type of HIV test is right for you and **Let's Stop HIV Together!**

Learn more about testing options:

www.cdc.gov/stophivtogether/hiv-testing/talk-testing.html



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