

## Get Tested for HIV

Don't avoid getting tested for HIV because you're afraid of what the result might be. If you don't find out now, it could be worse later. Knowing your HIV status empowers you to make important decisions for your health and your life. The sooner you find out, the better your chances are to stay negative or to fight HIV and take good care of yourself.

For more information about AIDS or HIV testing, call the **California AIDS Hotline**  
**1-800-367-AIDS (2437)**  
Services are available in English, Filipino and Spanish.

Agency  
information  
here

This brochure is provided by the California Department of Health Services, Office of AIDS, in collaboration with Nakatomi & Associates, Inc., the California AIDS Clearinghouse, the Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team (APAIT) and Barangay, The Gay Filipino Association of Los Angeles.

Photography: Jeff Ceaser / Enlight Storyworks

Summer 2001

## Risky Situations

Sometimes, we can make unhealthy decisions. Certain circumstances can put you at greater risk for getting HIV:

- going home with someone after going out to a club, bar, or party and having unprotected sex.
- chatting online that leads to meeting someone and having unprotected sex.
- getting high on alcohol or drugs and having unprotected sex.

**Risk can happen in any situation.**

Remember that you have the responsibility and control over whether or not you become infected with HIV.

## Play It Safe

When you're intimate with someone the best ways to lower your risk against getting HIV are:

- understanding how HIV is transmitted and how you can protect yourself and your loved ones
- talking with your partner about experiences with past partners and injection drug use and asking if he's ever been tested for HIV or other STDs
- using latex condoms properly and consistently (with only water-based lubrication)
- using unlubricated latex condoms for oral sex
- being in a monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner

**Proper use of a condom will help protect you against HIV.**

## What Is an HIV Test?

An HIV test is a simple blood or oral test to see if you are infected with HIV. The test looks for HIV antibodies that your body produces if you are infected. When you take your HIV test, you will talk with an HIV test counselor confidentially to assess your risk for HIV infection and develop a plan to reduce your risk.

Then, you will schedule a return visit to receive your results, usually one to two weeks later. **It is important that you return for your test results.** Knowing your HIV status is a step towards taking care of yourself.

## What Happens When I Find Out My Results?

If your result is negative, it means you are not infected with HIV. Or in some circumstances, it could mean that you were recently infected but your body has not had enough time to develop antibodies because you are in the "window period." Most people develop antibodies within 12 weeks; however, the window period can be up to six months from the time of infection before enough antibodies are present to produce an accurate result.

If your result is positive, it means you are infected with HIV and can also infect other people if you have unprotected sex or share needles. Your HIV test counselor can provide referrals to help you receive early medical care, learn about treatments that could prevent or delay the onset of AIDS, and help you maintain your health and quality of life.

## Where Can I Take an HIV Test?

To find the test site nearest you, call the California AIDS Hotline at 1-800-367-2437. There are different kinds of test sites, so find out whether anonymous or confidential tests are offered.

When you take an anonymous test, you will receive a code number and that is the only way you will be identified. Your name is not on any records.

When you take a confidential test, you will be asked to sign a consent form to take the test. Your name will appear on the results. However, your medical record will be kept confidential.

Call to see if you need an appointment. Most sites offer free or low-cost testing. A home test collection kit is another option and can be purchased from drug stores.

Wherever you choose to test, your result will remain discreet and confidential.

# Filipinos are

# not immune.

