



Your Health, Your Hands: The Benefits and Best Practices of HIV Self-Testing

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
HIV self-testing	“HIV self-testing” lets you check for HIV by yourself, without visiting a doctor or clinic. You use a kit at home to collect a tiny sample (usually from your finger), and then follow the instructions to see the result. It’s a private way to find out if you might have HIV. But remember, if the test shows a positive result, it’s important to know that you’ll need to get a confirmatory test from a healthcare professional to be sure.
Ending the HIV Epidemic	“Ending the HIV Epidemic” means taking strong and determined actions to stop the spread of HIV and reduce the number of new cases. It involves strategies like making sure everyone has access to testing and treatment, educating people about how to protect themselves, and providing support to those who are affected by HIV. The goal is to bring down the number of new infections and improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities.
Confirmatory Testing or Follow-up Testing	“Confirmatory testing” or “follow-up testing” is like a second check to make sure about something important. In the case of HIV testing, it’s an extra test that is done after an initial reactive result from another test. This is to double-check and be really sure if the first test was accurate. It’s an important step to make sure that the results are correct and to decide what the next steps should be for your health.
Preliminary Positive	“Preliminary positive” in HIV rapid testing means that the first test showed a result that suggests a person might have HIV. However, this result needs to be confirmed by another more detailed test to be absolutely sure. It’s like a “maybe” result that needs a second check to make sure if the person actually has HIV or not. Until the confirmation test is done, it’s important to talk to a healthcare professional and follow their guidance.
Reactive Test Result	A “non-reactive test result” in HIV rapid testing means that the first test did not show any signs of HIV in your body. It’s like getting a “negative” result. This is good news, but it’s important to remember that if you’ve been in situations where you might have been exposed to HIV recently, it’s a good idea to keep testing regularly to make sure you stay healthy.
HIV Medical Care	“HIV medical care” means getting help from doctors and healthcare professionals to take care of your health if you have HIV. This includes regular check-ups, taking medicines as prescribed, and making sure your body stays strong. The healthcare team will help you manage your HIV, stay healthy, and make choices that are good for your well-being.
Partner Services	“Partner Services” in the context of HIV self-testing means that if you test positive for HIV using a self-test, there are programs and people available to help you let your sexual or needle-sharing partners know that they might have been exposed to HIV. This helps them get tested and get the care they need. Partner services are a way to make sure everyone knows their HIV status and gets support for their health. It’s an important step in preventing the spread of HIV and getting people the right medical attention.
Positive Result	A “positive result” in HIV self-testing means that the test has shown that you might have HIV. It’s like a signal that there could be the virus in your body. However, it’s really important to remember that a positive result from an HIV self-test needs to be confirmed by another test done by a healthcare professional. This extra test is to be absolutely sure about whether you have HIV or not.

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Confidentiality	“Confidentiality” in the context of HIV testing means that the information about your test results and your health status is kept private and only shared with people who need to know, like doctors and healthcare professionals.
Informed Consent	“Informed consent” in the context of HIV testing means that you are given all the important information you need to know about the test. This includes details about what the test is for, how it works, what the results might mean, and what will happen next. You also have the opportunity to ask questions and make your own decision about whether you want to get tested or not. Informed consent ensures that you have a clear understanding of what’s involved in the HIV test and that you agree to go ahead with it based on your own choice and understanding.
PrEP	“PrEP” stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. It’s a special medicine that people who are at high risk of getting HIV can take to lower their chances of getting infected. It’s like a shield that helps protect you from getting HIV if you come into contact with the virus. PrEP is taken before you might be exposed to HIV, and it can be really effective when used correctly. It’s an important option for people who want to stay healthy and reduce their risk of getting HIV. Remember, PrEP is just one part of staying safe, so it’s always good to use other protection methods as well, like condoms.
Oral Swab	The action of gently wiping the inside of your mouth, usually on your gums or cheek. This collects a small sample of cells. The sample is then checked to see if there is any sign of the HIV virus. The oral swab is a simple and painless way to test for HIV without needing to use a needle or take blood. It’s an easier way to get tested and know your HIV status.
OraQuick	OraQuick is a type of HIV test that you can use by yourself. It’s designed to be simple and easy. With OraQuick, you use a special swab to wipe your gums inside your mouth. Then you put the swab in a test solution. After about 20 minutes, you can see the result. If there are lines that appear, it means you might have HIV. But remember, this is just the first test. If it shows you might have HIV, you need to go to a doctor or clinic for more tests to be sure. OraQuick is a way to start checking your HIV status on your own, but you need a healthcare expert to confirm the results.
Invalid Test Result	An “invalid test result” in HIV testing means that the test didn’t work correctly or didn’t give a clear answer. It’s like when a puzzle piece doesn’t fit properly, and you can’t see the whole picture. In this case, the test didn’t show if a person has HIV or not, so it needs to be done again. It’s important to make sure the test is done properly to get an accurate result. If a test is invalid, it doesn’t mean anything is wrong with the person being tested – it just means the test needs to be redone to get a clear answer.
Linkage to Care	“Linkage to care” in HIV testing refers to the important step of connecting a person who tests positive for HIV to a healthcare provider or a doctor. It’s like giving someone a map to reach a safe and supportive place. When someone is linked to care, they can get the right medical attention, treatment, and support they need to stay healthy while living with HIV. This step helps ensure that they receive the best care and guidance to manage their health effectively.
Risk Reduction	“Risk reduction” in HIV testing means taking steps to lower the chances of getting HIV. It’s like wearing a seatbelt when you’re in a car – it helps keep you safe. With risk reduction, you make choices to protect yourself from situations that might lead to HIV transmission, such as using condoms, getting tested regularly, and making informed decisions about your sexual health. By practicing risk reduction, you’re taking control of your well-being and making choices to stay healthy and prevent the spread of HIV.
Access to Medical Care	“Access to medical care” in HIV testing means having the opportunity to see a doctor or healthcare provider if you test positive for HIV. It’s like having a key to a door that leads to the help you need. When you have access to medical care, you can get the right treatments, medicines, and support to manage your health if you have HIV. This step is important to make sure you stay healthy and get the proper care from experts who know how to take care of people living with HIV.



TERM | DEFINITION

Treatment as Prevention (TasP)

“Treatment as Prevention (TasP)” in HIV testing means that when someone is diagnosed with HIV, getting the right treatment can also help prevent the virus from spreading to others. It’s like stopping a fire before it spreads by using water. When a person with HIV takes their medicine as prescribed, it lowers the amount of virus in their body. This makes it much less likely for them to pass HIV to someone else. TasP not only helps the person with HIV stay healthy but also plays a big role in stopping the spread of HIV to their partners. It’s an important strategy to protect both individual health and the health of the community.

Peer Navigator

A “Peer Navigator” is someone who has personal experience with a specific health condition, like HIV, and is trained to provide guidance, support, and information to others who are going through similar situations. Think of them as friendly guides who understand what you’re going through and can help you navigate challenges, answer questions, and connect you to the right resources. Peer Navigators use their own experiences to offer valuable insights and help you make informed decisions about your health and well-being.

Case Management

“Case Management” is a service where a trained professional, called a case manager, helps people with complex health needs or challenges to coordinate and access the right services, support, and resources. It’s like having a knowledgeable guide who helps you put together all the pieces of a puzzle. Case managers work closely with individuals to create a personalized plan, connect them to medical care, social services, and other essential resources, and help them navigate through the healthcare system. The goal of case management is to improve a person’s overall well-being by ensuring they receive the right care and support to address their specific needs.



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