

You are at risk and should be tested:

1. If you've had unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex.
2. If, during sex, your condom has burst or leaked.
3. If you believe your partner has been unfaithful.
4. If you suspect or know that a past partner died from HIV/AIDS.
5. If you have multiple sex partners and do not use condoms every time.
6. If you have a sexually transmitted infection (STI) such as herpes, syphilis, chlamydia, genital warts or gonorrhoea.
7. If you suspect your partner has an STI.
8. If you have been raped.
9. If you have shared unsterilized needles for intravenous drug use.
10. If you have exchanged sex for drugs or money.
11. If someone else's blood has accidentally gotten into a cut or abrasion on your skin.
12. If you have been diagnosed or treated for Tuberculosis (TB) or Hepatitis.

If you have had sex with someone who has done any of the above.

The **only** way to KNOW if you are infected is to get tested.

HIV is **NOT** spread by:

Mosquitoes, toilets, sharing food, kissing, hugging, shaking hands or handling office equipment.

You can't tell if someone is infected by the way they look.

HIV positive people may not show any symptoms for years and can pass on the infection without knowing they are infected. HIV can infect people regardless of their class, race, religion, age, marital status or education.

There is no cure.

However, there is treatment that can keep HIV positive people leading healthy, productive lives for a very long time.

Make sure your partner gets tested, too. Knowing the status of the person you decide to have sex with is as important as knowing your own status.

List of VCT sites

Name	Address	Telephone	Region
Hope for All	Suddie Hospital, Suddie, Essequibo Coast	774 4227	2
West Demerara Hospital	Vreed en Hoop WCD	254 0311/0313	3
Dorothy Bailey Health Centre	South Rd Georgetown	225 6460	4
David Rose Health Centre	274 West Ruimveldt Front Road	223 6365	4
GPHC – MOPD	GPHC Compound	225 6902	4
GPHC – A&E	GPHC Compound	227 8204/2	4
GPHC Medical Wards	GPHC Compound	227 8204/2	4
GPHC – Chest Clinic	GPHC Compound	227 8204/2	4
GPHC – Gum Clinic	GPHC Compound	226 0664	4
GPHC – Malaria Clinic	GPHC Compound	227 8204/2	4
GRPA	20 Quamina St Georgetown	225 6493	4
St Joseph Mercy Hospital – Stemming the Tide Programme	130-132 Parade St., Georgetown	227 2072/5	4
Enmore Health Centre	Estate Road, Enmore, ECD	270 6899	4
St Francis Community Developers	Port Mourant, Berbice	-	6
New Amsterdam Hospital	New Amsterdam, Berbice	333 6614	6
Port Mourant Hospital	Port Mourant, Berbice	336 6376	6
Skeldon Hospital	Skeldon, Corriverton, Corentyne Berbice	339 2211	6
Fort Wellington Hospital	West Coast Berbice	232 0294	6
Hope Foundation	Bartica	455 2891/2462	7
Bartica Hospital	2 nd Ave, Bartica	455 2339	7
Linden Care Foundation	Linmine Office Complex, Casuarina Drive McKenzie	444 6693	10
Amelia's Ward Health Centre	Amelia's Ward, Wismar	Managed by GHARP 231 6311	10
Christianburg Health Centre	Christianburg, Wismar	Managed by GHARP 231 6311	10
One Mile Health Centre	One Mile Wismar	Managed by GHARP 231 6311	10
Upper Demerara Hospital	Wismar	Managed by GHARP 231 6311	10

HIV Positive?

HIV Negative?

If you've had unprotected sex or think your partner has been unfaithful, don't just WORRY about HIV.

Get Tested. The sooner, the better.

What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for **A**cquired **I**mmune **D**eficiency **S**ndrome and is caused by a virus known as the **H**uman **I**mmunodeficiency **V**irus or **HIV**.

Acquired: Meaning that it is a virus that a person contracts as opposed to a condition that is hereditary (passed on through genes).

Immune: Your immune system is the part of the body that protects you from germs, viruses and bacteria and so keeps you healthy.

Deficiency: It creates a deficiency or weakness in your immune system, causing it to malfunction.

Syndrome: A wide range of different diseases, conditions and opportunistic infections someone with AIDS may experience.

What is HIV?

Human: The virus can only affect humans.

Immuno-deficiency: The virus causes the immune system to lack the required elements for it to function properly.

Virus: The germ (micro-organism) responsible for the infection. It is extremely small and can only survive and multiply within living cells at the expense of these cells.



There are good reasons to get tested. The sooner the better. The test is available FREE in Guyana.

"Being tested doesn't mean you have HIV. It means you're making a smart choice."

If you're NEGATIVE, you can stop worrying.



It's a relief to know that you are negative. Remember, though, that if you've been tested and you're negative, you have to wait three months and be tested again to be sure. While you wait, it's important to protect yourself by not having sex or by making sure you use a condom correctly. EVERY time.

If you have unprotected sex on Friday night and get tested on Monday, the results will not be correct. You have to wait three months and be tested again to be sure.

You can protect yourself so you stay that way.

If you are negative after your second test and if you decide to continue having sex, know how to use a condom and use it correctly every time. If you have sex, condoms are the only safe protection against HIV.

Even if you are negative, it does not insure that your partner is negative.

If you test POSITIVE, treatment is available.

People living with HIV who get care and treatment can live healthy, full lives for a very long time. When you first find out you may feel angry, depressed or afraid. These are normal feelings. Counseling and support is available to help you.

People who have tested positive say that it is difficult to accept at first but over time it becomes easier to come to terms with the results.

You can prevent the spread of HIV.

Protect your partner by practicing abstinence or use a condom. Protect yourself, too. If you become re-infected, HIV can develop more quickly into AIDS.



You can get early treatment.

It's important to find out as soon as possible because the sooner you know, the sooner you can get treatment and care. Treating HIV early can slow down how fast HIV multiplies in your body.



Treatment is free in Guyana. But you can't get treatment unless you know your status.

If you're pregnant, you can protect your child.

Women with HIV can transmit the virus to their unborn child. However, the use of special drugs during pregnancy and at birth, can now prevent the infection from being passed from mother to child.

If you are pregnant, GET TESTED so if you are positive your child can be protected.

The virus can also be transmitted through breast-feeding. This can be prevented when an HIV positive mother uses alternative milk recommended by her doctor.



Fathers can encourage mothers to get tested, too. An innocent child could be at risk.

You can take good care of your immune system.

Eating a variety of healthy, fresh foods is important for everybody. It's more important if you have HIV. Good nutrition will prevent tiredness and weight loss and keep your immune system fighting off infections. Get exercise and avoid smoking cigarettes. Don't use drugs and alcohol because they put an unnecessary strain on your immune system.



Free care and treatment is available to you.

"I have been living with HIV for 14 years. I work, take care of my children and live a normal life."

If you are positive, you will be referred for free care and treatment services in Guyana. These include the management of HIV related illnesses, and access to anti-retroviral drugs to help keep your HIV level low. If your doctor prescribes medication you must take it exactly as instructed.

Telling others about your status

Although it is very important to tell your sex partner(s), it is your decision. When you tell them, they can get tested and get treatment. Your counselor can give you suggestions about how to talk to them.

It helps to have someone you can talk to.

Find people who can support you.

In addition to your doctor, it can be family members, a friend or a support group of other HIV positive people. Having people around who can understand what you're going through is important. Find out about support groups in your area. Ask your doctor or counselor.

Or contact the

National AIDS Programme Secretariat

at Hadfield and College Road, Brickdam, at any Regional Hospital or call the AIDS HOTLINE—223-7138.

Check the website at www.hiv.gov.gy

To get tested go to a Voluntary HIV Counseling and Testing (VCT) site.

(See back for a list of VCT sites.)

You will meet briefly for pre-test counseling.

A confidential counselor will discuss questions, issues and fears about HIV. This private session prepares you for the test and the results. No one will pressure you to have the test. It's alright to talk with a counselor several times before you decide to have the test.

It is confidential.

No one will take your name. You will receive a file code number and a card. Counselors know how important it is to keep your results confidential. Whatever issues come out during the VCT session will be known only by you and your counselor.



Testing is only a finger prick blood test.

Testing a few drops of your blood determines whether or not you have the antibodies for HIV. The test only takes a minute and at VCT sites you don't have to wait long for the results. You will know your status in about a half hour.

How does the test work?

The test used to detect HIV infection checks your blood for antibodies produced by your body to fight HIV. Most people will develop antibodies that can be detected within three months of exposure. To make sure the test results are correct, two tests are done (but your finger is pricked only once). If both tests are positive it means you have the HIV infection.

After the test, the counselor will talk to you again.

Depending on your test results, information and options will be discussed.

"Most people who get tested are negative. But it's important to know for sure."

VCT sites in Guyana use the Rapid HIV Test.

You can get your results within 30 minutes.

Respect Yourself. Protect Yourself.

