

# Test And Go (TAG)

Today you had tests for

- Gonorrhoea
- Chlamydia
- HIV
- Syphilis

If you have agreed, we will send you an SMS if you have a negative HIV result. We will contact you if any of the tests show that you have any of the infections above or if a test needs to be repeated for any other reason.

## HIV

HIV can be transmitted in a number of ways. For men who have sex with men, anal sex without condoms is the most common way. Other forms of transmission include vaginal sex without condoms and sharing of drug injecting equipment.

The HIV test you have today will NOT tell us anything about any possible HIV exposures from risky sex in the 6 weeks prior to the blood test taken today. This 6 week period is called the window period.

If you have had risky sex in this timeframe, you will have to retest, as a HIV blood test done during the window period may indicate a person does not have HIV when in fact they do have HIV.

## Type of HIV testing at Melbourne Sexual Health Centre

At Melbourne Sexual Health Centre, we offer a HIV antibody test. If you are infected with HIV, then HIV antibodies will be present in your blood if you test at least six weeks after your risk for HIV.

## Other Considerations

For some people, having a HIV test can be stressful and appointments with a counsellor are available to discuss the implications or any concerns.

Current HIV treatments dramatically improve the duration and quality of life of people living with HIV if the infection is detected early

## **HIV RESULTS AND WHAT THEY MEAN**

**HIV negative** there was no HIV detected in the sample collected on the day of your visit.

Remember the need to test again if you have had risky sex in the window period and use condoms until the repeat test is also negative.

**HIV positive** HIV was detected. We will not give this result on the phone, but will call you to attend to discuss your result, and support you with this diagnosis.

**HIV inconclusive** means the HIV test result was uncertain and neither negative nor positive. About half of these inconclusive results are negative on retesting and half are the very early stages of HIV infection, also known as HIV seroconversion. The test will need to be repeated to confirm whether the HIV results is positive or not. Use condoms to protect partners from HIV. We will not give an inconclusive result on the phone but will call you to discuss the result.

## **TESTING FOR HIV REGULARLY**

In Victoria 1 in 10 gay or men who have sex men is HIV positive. Many new HIV transmissions occur because some gay men think they're negative when they're actually positive. That's because it can take years before HIV symptoms are noticeable. Testing regularly so you know your HIV status allows you to protect your health and the health of your sexual partners.

Condoms prevent or reduce the exchange of semen, vaginal fluid or blood between partners during sex. When used with lube, condoms are a highly effective way to 'stay safe' and prevent HIV transmission.

Condoms also offer protection against a range of other sexually transmissible infections (STIs). They do this by preventing the transfer of bodily fluids or by covering affected genital areas.

Reduce the number of people you have condomless sex with. More sex partners without using condoms increases your HIV risk. The more partners you have, the more likely to have a sexual partner with HIV or a sexually transmitted infection.

Use of alcohol and other drugs. Chem sex (sex

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on Xpress Test and Go. It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. All clients are strongly advised to check with their doctor about any specific questions or concerns they may have. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of printing.

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while using drugs) has been shown to reduce ability to negotiate condom use. If alcohol or other drugs is an issue for you or you believe it makes you take risks you normally would not, it could be time to speak to a health care professional about its use and effects on you. <http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/drug-facts/drugs-the-facts>

Counselling provides the opportunity for safe and confidential exploration of your concerns without judgment. VAC offers specific counselling and support on alcohol and other drugs

<http://www.vac.org.au/AODServices>

Please call 93416200 to make an appointment with one of our counsellors at Melbourne Sexual Health Centre. If you inject drugs and share needles you may be at risk of hepatitis C.

Further information on Hepatitis is available in brochures in our waiting room, and also on our website.

**Get tested and treated for other sexually transmitted infection (STIs) and encourage your partners to do the same.** Sexually transmitted infections often have no signs or symptoms and having a STI increases your chance of getting HIV or transmitting the STI to others. Syphilis is common among men who have sex with men often without any symptoms or signs. If you have anal or penis symptoms or any ulcers or genital skin lesions it is best not to have sex until you have seen the doctor to rule out an infection and therefore reducing your risk of getting HIV.

## PREP (PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS)

Is a HIV prevention option that works by taking one pill a day. It uses a HIV medication to prevent HIV infection. Studies have shown around 85% lower HIV infection rate compared to those men who did not take PrEP. PrEP is not yet available at Melbourne Sexual Health Centre, for more information go to <http://vicprep.csrh.org/> Remember -Test Test Test every 3 months is best if you've had a sexual risk with another man. Knowing your HIV status protects your health and the health of your sexual partners.

## NPEP (Post-exposure Prophylaxis)

**Talk to your doctor right away (within 3 days) about NPEP if you have a possible exposure to HIV**

Phone 1800 889 887 for NPEP information

NPEP is a course of anti-HIV medication commenced within 72 hours of exposure to HIV and taken for 28 days with the aim of reducing HIV infection. NPEP is taken primarily for sexual and injecting drug use exposures in the community and is reserved for exposures where the HIV risk is significant. To find out where to access NPEP across Victoria or to speak to a nurse about your risk contact the NPEP 'hotline' which operates 24 hour 7 day a week. Phone 1800 889 887

- **If your partner is HIV-positive, discuss with your partner if he is on HIV treatment and whether his HIV viral load is suppressed.** HIV treatment reduces the amount of HIV virus (viral load) in blood and body fluids. If taken consistently and correctly, HIV medication can keep people with HIV healthy for many years, and greatly reduce their chance of transmitting HIV to sex partners.
- **Be blood aware.** If you are practicing sexual activities that involve blood like fisting /S&M/ piercing etc gloves are important for protecting both participants surgical gloves are best.

Blood is a high risk fluid for HIV transmission this means not sharing injecting equipment if injecting drugs and using our own snorting equipment if using amyl /cocaine or meth.

## Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B

Vaccines for these infections are recommended for men who have sex with men. Please discuss these with your general practitioner or during a full consultation at MSHC.

Further information on Hepatitis is available in brochures in our waiting room, and also on our website.

Test AND Go (TAG) appointments every Wednesday. [mshc.org.au/ClinicInformation/ClinicalServices/TestAndGo](http://mshc.org.au/ClinicInformation/ClinicalServices/TestAndGo)