

Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#78 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

STOP HIV IN NYC



Know Your HIV Status—Stay Safe!



- Available in Spanish, Chinese and other languages: call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health
- Disponible en español: llame al 311 o visite nyc.gov/health
- 需要中文服務 - 可電 311 或造訪網址: nyc.gov/health



Get Tested for HIV

If you have ever had sex, or ever injected drugs (even if only once), get tested.

- An HIV test is the only way to know if you have been infected with HIV.
- Rapid HIV tests can give results in less than an hour.
- An HIV test does *not* prevent HIV or treat HIV disease.
- It can take several weeks after you get infected for a test to show that you have HIV. If you think you may have been exposed, get another test 6 weeks later to confirm.

If you are NOT infected with HIV (“HIV negative”):

- Take steps to stay that way (see **Protect Yourself and Others**).
- If you are at higher risk (for example, if you have had recent unprotected sex or injection drug use), get tested for HIV at least once a year.
- If you are at higher risk, you should also be tested regularly for other sexually transmitted diseases. Having any STD makes it easier to get or spread HIV.

If you ARE infected with HIV (“HIV positive”):

Take steps to stay healthy and keep from infecting others (see **If You Have HIV, It’s Important to Know**).

Protect Yourself and Others

The only ways to be 100% protected against HIV are not having sex and not injecting drugs.

- **If you are having sex**, reduce your risk by having sex only in a mutually monogamous relationship with a partner you are sure is not infected.
- **If you have sex outside of such a relationship**, take these steps to reduce your risk:
 - *Reduce the number of people you have sex with.* The more partners you have, the greater your risk — especially if you don’t know their HIV status.
 - *Always use a condom* (see **Use a Condom Every Time**).
 - *Avoid alcohol and other drugs* when you have sex. Being drunk or high makes it harder to remember to use condoms.
- **If you inject drugs**, stay safe until you can stop. NEVER share needles or “works.” Use a new, sterile needle and “works” every time (see **More Information**).



Use a Condom Every Time

Condoms protect against HIV and many other STDs.

- Use only latex, polyurethane or nitrile condoms.
- Condoms made of “natural” materials like lambskin prevent pregnancy, but they do **not** protect against HIV and other STDs.
- If you are allergic to latex, use condoms made of polyurethane or nitrile.
- Female condoms, which are placed in the vagina, are made of nitrile. They work just as well as male condoms. Never use a male and a female condom together. Some people use female condoms for anal sex.
- If you’re pregnant, condoms will protect you and your baby against HIV and other STDs.
- Get free condoms. Find out where at **311** or nyc.gov/condoms.



Be Prepared!

- You have a right to insist that your sex partner uses a condom.
- Don't depend on other people to have condoms — carry your own.

If You Have HIV, It's Important to Know

Take steps to protect your health.

Get medical treatment to feel better and live longer.

- See a health care provider who specializes in treating HIV.
- **Call 311** for information about HIV treatment, care and other services.
- Health care is available regardless of ability to pay or immigration status.

If you are pregnant or planning pregnancy:

- Medicine can improve your health and protect your baby.
- Breastfeeding can transmit HIV to your baby. Talk to your health care provider for guidance.

You can do other things to stay healthy, for example:

- Eat healthy and be physically active.
- Get immunized against flu, pneumonia and hepatitis A and B.
- Quit smoking. For help, **call 311** and ask for the Smokers' Quitline.
- Get help for depression, or for alcohol and drug problems. Talk to your health care provider or **call 311** (see **More Information**).



Do ask — and do tell — if you have HIV.

- Talk to anyone you have had sex with so they can get testing and counseling, too. If you need help notifying your partners, talk to your health care provider or call **311** (see **More Information**).
- Tell people that you have HIV *before* you have sex with them (*even if they don't ask!*).
- Get tested regularly for other sexually transmitted diseases. Having an STD can make HIV worse.
- Never have sex without a condom. Even if you take medications to treat HIV, and even if your viral load is not detectable, you can still transmit HIV.

Some Activities Are Riskier Than Others

According to the best available evidence:

- Injection drug users who share needles are at very high risk of getting and transmitting HIV.
- Receptive sexual partners are at higher risk. HIV can more easily enter the body through anal and vaginal tissues. But unprotected sex is risky for *both* partners.
- Receptive anal intercourse is by far the riskiest sexual act. Protecting against HIV by always using condoms is especially important for men who have sex with men — and anyone who has anal sex.
- Oral sex carries some risk, but is much less risky than other sexual activities.
- Having unprotected sex is extremely risky. Condoms greatly reduce HIV risk for both partners in anal, vaginal and oral sex.

Some women are at higher risk than they think.

- Some women are at higher risk for HIV because their male partners have sex with other men, or inject drugs, without telling them.
- Unprotected vaginal sex is how 9 out of 10 women with HIV became infected. That is why condoms are so important.
- Anal sex is even riskier than vaginal sex. Women who have unprotected anal sex are **30 times** more likely to get HIV than from unprotected vaginal sex. Condoms are especially important for anal sex — use one every time!

Where to Get Tested

- You can get an HIV test from your regular doctor or health care provider.
- Many hospitals, clinics and community-based organizations also offer HIV tests. **Call 311** to find a location near you, or text your ZIP Code to KnowIt (566948).
- Free, confidential testing and treatment for STDs — including rapid HIV tests — are available at Health Department clinics in all 5 boroughs (see **More Information**).
- People under age 18 do not need parental consent to be tested for HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.



STAY SAFE



GET TESTED



GET CARE

More Information and Help

- For more information about HIV and other STDs (including where to get free, confidential, or anonymous counseling and testing), call 311 or visit nyc.gov/std
- For more about condoms: Call 311 and ask for Health Bulletin #47: NYC Condoms, or visit nyc.gov/condoms
- For help notifying partners: Call 311 and ask for CNAP (Contact Notification Assistance Program)
- To find a needle exchange program (or get help for mental health or drug problems): Call 311 or LifeNet: 800-LifeNet (800-543-3638)
- Spanish LifeNet: 877-AYUDESE (877-298-3373)
- Asian LifeNet (Mandarin, Cantonese and Korean): 877-990-8585
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/hiv or hivtest.org

**DIAL
311**

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New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

125 Worth Street, Room 1047, CN 33
New York, N.Y. 10013

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Thomas Farley, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner

Bureau of Communications

Geoffrey Cowley, Associate Commissioner
Cortnie Lowe, M.F.A., Executive Editor
Drew Blakeman, Senior Writer

Prepared in cooperation with:

Division of Disease Control, Bureau of HIV Prevention and Control
Monica Sweeney, M.D., M.P.H., Assistant Commissioner



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**DIAL
311**

For Non-Emergency NYC Services
Telephone Interpretation in 170 Languages