Negative HIV Antibody Test

What does my HIV-negative test result mean?

Being HIV negative means that the test showed no sign of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) - the virus that causes AIDS - at the time the test was done.

So, I don't have to worry about getting HIV anymore, right?

NO! A negative test result could mean that you do not have HIV infection or that you do have HIV infection but your body has not made antibodies yet. Most people with HIV will have a positive blood test six weeks after they have been infected, but it can take up to six months for HIV antibodies to show up in your body. A negative test **does not** mean that you are immune to HIV, or that you can't be infected in the future.

Should I take the test again?

Talk to your counselor honestly about when you have been at risk, and when you might need to come back and get tested again. The questions below may help you decide if you should get tested again.

Did you do any of the following during the past six weeks before your HIV test, or any time after your test:

1. have sex (oral, anal or vaginal) without using a condom?
2. share drug, tattoo, or body piercing needles or syringes?
3. have sex without a condom with anyone who has done either of those things?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you should consider taking another HIV test. If you are the sex partner of someone with a positive HIV antibody test, use condoms and get retested every 3-6 months.

How can I avoid becoming infected with HIV?

- **Don't have sex.** This is the only sure way to avoid getting infected with HIV through sex.
- **If you choose to have sex, use a latex condom every time** unless you are sure your partner is not infected. While condoms do not provide 100% protection, when

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used correctly, they are the best available form of prevention for people who are sexually active.

- **Stay with one sex partner who only has sex with you.** Use condoms unless you are sure your partner is not infected.
- **If you shoot drugs, don't share needles, syringes, and other works.** If you have to share, learn how to clean your works properly with bleach and water. It's best for your health to not do drugs. Talk to your counselor or call the National Drug Abuse Hotline at 1-800-662-HELP to get information on how to get into a drug treatment program.

Here are some other important things to think about.

Only use water-based lubricants with condoms. Do not use baby oil, hand lotion, Vaseline, or anything else that has oil in it. Oil will make the condom break.

Women wanting to have a baby should talk about their HIV risk with their doctor before getting pregnant. If you are already pregnant, talk to your doctor about getting tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). If you are infected, early testing and prenatal care can reduce the chance of your baby becoming infected with HIV or other STDs.

Drugs, alcohol, and sex are a bad mix. Even if needles are not shared, drugs and alcohol can contribute to HIV risk by causing people to make dangerous choices about sex. If you're drinking or using, don't have sex! Drug and alcohol treatment programs are available for people who want to stop using. Talk to your counselor about what will work best for you.

For HIV/STD testing locations in Texas, call: 2-1-1

For other HIV/STD questions, call:
1 (800) CDC-INFO (English/Español)
1 (888) 232-6348 (TTY)

For more information, go to: www.dshs.state.tx.us/hivstd

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