

HIV TESTING

In 1985 HIV testing became available and was primarily used to test the blood supply to help prevent transmission via blood transfusions. Over 20 years later, not only is the blood supply still rigorously tested, but HIV testing has become a standard for many people as a means of prevention and early detection. With the many advancements in treatments made available over the last several years, earlier detection can equal a longer and healthier life.

TESTING OPTIONS

When it comes to HIV testing, you have options. In the state of Nebraska, you may test anonymously, which means that you may test without providing your real name or any contact information. You may also test confidentially, which means that you provide your name, address, telephone number, and date of birth. Either way, any information obtained from you is kept strictly confidential. It will never be released to your family, partner, friends, doctor, insurance provider, or employer.

HIV positive tests are, however, required to be reported to the appropriate health department. Your information remains confidential even after being reported to the health department. The health department will then assist you in notifying your partners of their potential exposure and help them get set up for testing as well. This process is referred to as Partner Notification and it is done entirely voluntarily and anonymously. This means that you can tell your partners without having to tell them yourself and without there ever being a connection to *you*.

TESTING METHODS

When you test with Nebraska AIDS Project, you are having an ELISA test performed. This test is not looking for the virus itself, it is looking for antibodies that your body will produce as a natural reaction to having exposure to the HIV virus. Your body needs time to create enough of these antibodies to reflect an accurate result if you have had exposure. This is why we recommend that you wait at least 25 days from potential exposure to have an HIV test done, or you may not receive an accurate result and will be encouraged to return in a few months for a follow-up test.

If your ELISA test reflects a positive, or reactive, result an additional Western Blot confirmatory test will be administered. This test will be sent to the Center for Disease Detection, and you will need to return approximately one week later to retrieve the results.

Nebraska AIDS Project will offer you the option of two different tests. These tests are equally as accurate as the other and will both warrant a 20 minute result. This means that either way, you will be in and out with your result that day.

OraQuick: This test is an oral swab that is run along the gums. This test uses oral mucosal transudate to detect the presence of antibodies.

Clearview Complete: This test requires a small prick to the finger and uses a drop of blood to detect the presence of antibodies.

REMINDER, if you have had potential exposure within the last 25 days, your test may not reflect an accurate result. Please wait at least 25 days prior to testing.