

What You Should Know About HIV and the OraQuick[®] Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test Prior to Being Tested

■ What should I know before I get tested?

Your healthcare provider is the best person to answer your questions about HIV, the OraQuick[®] Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test, and other testing options.

You have a choice of the type of test to use. When you are tested for HIV, a specimen will be collected and checked for HIV antibodies. The presence of HIV antibodies in your body means that you have been infected with the virus that causes AIDS.

You should be aware that the presence of HIV antibodies can be detected in many ways. Ask your healthcare provider for the information you need to make good choices. Some questions answered in this pamphlet are:

- What are HIV and AIDS?
- How does someone get HIV?
- How can I avoid becoming infected?
- Why should I get tested?
- What is the OraQuick[®] Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test and how is it done?
- What does a preliminary positive result mean?
- What does a negative result mean?
- Where can I get more information?

■ What are HIV and AIDS?

HIV is the human immunodeficiency virus. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). It is possible for a person to have the virus for months or years before any signs of illness appear. The virus weakens the body's ability to fight off infections. As a result, people with AIDS develop serious infections and cancers. These illnesses make them very sick and can eventually kill them.

■ How does someone get HIV?

HIV spreads through contact with blood, semen, vaginal fluids, or breast milk from infected people. Contact can come from unsafe sex. It can also come from sharing used needles and syringes. Infected women can pass the virus to their babies during pregnancy, childbirth, and breast feeding. It is also possible to become infected with HIV through a blood transfusion, although this is now very rare.

People do not become infected with HIV through everyday casual contact with people at school, work, home, or anywhere else. The virus is not spread from contact with

sweat, tears, saliva, or a casual kiss from an infected person (deep, or “French” kissing is not advised). Nor can people become infected from contact with forks, cups, clothes, phones, toilet seats, or other things used by someone who is infected with HIV. People do not become infected from eating food prepared by an HIV-infected person. People have not become infected with HIV through insect bites.

■ How can I avoid becoming infected?

The best way to avoid getting HIV is to avoid activities that would allow the virus to be passed to you. By following these suggestions, you will lower your risk of getting HIV:

- The only way to avoid sexual exposure to HIV is to have sex with an uninfected partner or to abstain.
- If you are not certain that your sex partner is uninfected, you should use a latex condom correctly every time you have sex.
- Do not share needles or syringes.

■ Why should I get tested?

You cannot generally tell by looking at someone whether he or she has an HIV infection. A person can be infected with HIV and not know it. The virus may take time to show its effects. A person can have HIV for ten years or more before the symptoms of AIDS appear. The only way to be confident that you are not infected is to get an HIV test.

It is important to find out if you are infected with HIV so that you do not infect someone else. If you know you are infected with HIV, you can avoid any activity that may pass it on.

It is also important to find out if you are infected with HIV so that you can receive good medical care. There are medicines that can help keep you healthy even though you are infected with the HIV virus.

■ What are my options for HIV testing?

OraQuick® provides a rapid HIV test result (in as little as 20 minutes) and in some settings a result is needed quickly, such as in hospital emergency rooms. However, in settings where a rapid HIV test is not needed, alternative tests can be done. You also have a choice of having another type of test that would require you to wait about a week for your results. This type of test can be done using a sample of blood taken from your vein, a sample of oral fluid taken from your mouth, or a sample of urine.

■ What is the OraQuick® Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test and how is it done?

The OraQuick® Rapid HIV-1 Antibody is used to see if a sample of your blood contains HIV antibodies. If you decide to have an OraQuick® test, your healthcare provider will take a small droplet of blood from your finger, run the test, and give the results to you

during the same visit. The OraQuick® test is very accurate. However, additional testing is necessary to confirm a preliminary positive result.

Complete information about the OraQuick® Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test device is available from your testing counselor or healthcare provider.

■ What does a PRELIMINARY POSITIVE result mean?

A PRELIMINARY POSITIVE result suggests that antibodies to HIV may be present in your blood. If you receive a PRELIMINARY POSITIVE result on the test, you will need to have another test to confirm the OraQuick® test result. You will also be encouraged to take precautions to avoid any chance of spreading HIV until your test result is confirmed.

If you are found to be infected, you may benefit from special medical care. New treatments can help keep you healthy, even though you are infected with HIV. See a doctor, even if you don't feel sick. A doctor can help you to live longer. Other tests can tell you how strong your immune system is and what treatments might be best for you. Some people stay healthy for a long time with HIV. Others may become ill more rapidly. Be careful not to pass HIV on to others.

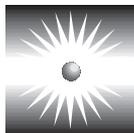
■ What does a NEGATIVE result mean?

A NEGATIVE result means that this test did not detect HIV antibodies in your blood. However, in some cases HIV infection cannot be ruled out completely. If you recently (within 3 months) had any of the contacts described in the “How does someone get HIV?” section of this pamphlet it is still possible that you are infected with HIV. This is because your body can take several months after you are infected to make HIV antibodies. If you became infected only recently, there may not have been enough time to develop antibodies that can be detected by the test. You should consider getting tested again in three to six months to be sure you are not infected. If you had none of the contacts that transmit HIV in the three months before your test, a negative test result means you were not infected with HIV at the time of testing. Ask your healthcare provider to help you understand what your result means for you.

■ Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions, ask your healthcare provider. You can also call the National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-342-AIDS (1-800-342-2437) to talk with an HIV specialist. They can give you quick, private answers at any time, day or night. Your local health department is another place to go for information. An AIDS service organization near you can also be a good source for information, education, and help.

The OraQuick® Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test is manufactured by:



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diagnostic solutions for the new millennium

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