

# What you need to know about HIV self-testing



مركز الأمراض الإنتقالية  
Communicable Disease Center

عضو في مؤسسة حمد الطبية  
A Member of Hamad Medical Corporation





# What you need to know about HIV self-testing

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## What is HIV self-testing?

- HIV self-testing is when, instead of having a nurse or healthcare worker perform the test for you, you conduct the test yourself in privacy, and at your convenience.
- You can do the test on your own or with a family member or a partner.
- With HIV self-testing, you are performing the test and reading the results yourself.
- It is easy to use as collected a specimen (either saliva or blood from a finger prick) can be used to perform a rapid HIV test and interprets the result immediately.

## Why is it important to know my HIV status?

- Early detection allows you to continue living a normal and healthy life, in case you are HIV negative, or nearly normal in case of positive result confirmed.
- Self-testing has proved to be an important tool in combating the spread of HIV.
- For those who are positive, early detection enables early access to treatment and care thereby increase the chances of a healthy life.
- HIV is a long-term, manageable condition once it's diagnosed.

## How reliable are the test results?

- In Qatar, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) recommends the use of very accurate kits produced by companies prequalified by the WHO, as follow:
  - Mylan HIV Self-Test: manufactured by Atomo Diagnostics Pty Ltd.
  - INSTI® HIV Self-Test: biolytic Laboratories Inc.
  - OraQuick HIV Self-Test: manufactured in Thailand for OraSure Technologies, Inc.
  - BioSure (UK) Ltd.
- To get an accurate result, you must follow all the instructions found on the kit leaflet.
- Tests are designed to provide fast and precise results while testing discreetly at home.

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### What is the HIV window period?

- The time from when HIV infection occurs to when a test can correctly give a positive result is called the 'HIV window period' or 'HIV test window period'.
- During this period, someone who has been infected with HIV could still get a negative HIV test result because they may not have produced the antibodies needed to generate a positive result.
- This does not mean the person is not HIV infected.

### What should I do after self-testing?

- In the case of Non-reactive results with potential exposure in the preceding 6 or 12 weeks, then retest is recommended.
- Staying HIV Negative: The best way is to abstain from sex outside of marriage. However, proper use of condom is the second-best way to protect yourself and others from HIV infection and other STI's (Sexually Transmitted Infections) as a condom provides reliable barrier protection.
- If your test result is POSITIVE, you must have confirmed the result with a healthcare professional.
- HMC Communicable Disease Centre team is available to help you with a variety of health services that you may need after self-testing with complete confidentiality. These services include:
  - Diagnostics
  - Counselling
  - HIV treatment
  - social support when needed
- Do not worry, you are not alone, HIV positive result is not the end, nowadays; available effective treatment allows you to live a nearly normal life.
- You can call CDC HIV hotline at 40254022 to book an appointment or talk to a healthcare professional.

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## Key messages for anyone who takes an HIV self-test

- You'll be able to start treatment as soon as you need it.
- Up to the moment; no cure available for HIV infection.
- Available HIV treatment allow you to live healthy near normal life, with same life expectancy like non infected people.
- Wait a minute! if you get early diagnosis studies you have chance to live longer than non-infected people!!
- Early treatment saves your immune system from damage, which may not be fully recovered with late treatment.
- Most common route of HIV transmission is unprotected sex.

## TIPs

- If you are confirmed to be HIV positive, this means you have the virus in your body. It doesn't mean you are ill, or you have AIDS.
- AIDS is an advanced stage of HIV infection and only happens after someone goes a long time without treatment. weak the immune system and expose individuals to infectious diseases which normally doesn't affect people with normal immune systems.
- The self-test kit is not designated for people who already living with HIV and on treatment, as it may give a false-negative result.
- It is not recommended that parents or guardians use HIV self-tests to tests their babies or children. HIV self-tests may not provide correct results in children under two years of age because the mother's antibodies may still be present in the child.

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### Resources:

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- WHO HIV SELF-TESTING: KEY QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND MESSAGES FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS 2018
- <https://aidsfree.usaid.gov/resources/hts-kb/posts/hiv-self-testingbrochure-do-you-want-test-yourself>





## **Patient and Family Education**



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