ANONYMOUS HIV TESTING

Heartland CARES offers FREE rapid HIV testing by appointment or on a walk-in basis. Results from rapid HIV tests are available in about 20 minutes; this testing includes an extensive pre- and post-test counseling session.

Why should you have an HIV test?

The CDC recommends HIV testing for all adults and adolescents aged 13-64 years, regardless of risk factors for HIV infection. Because most HIV-infected persons do not develop AIDS-related manifestations until at least 5 years after their initial HIV infection, a rapid HIV test at Heartland CARES could provide you with early diagnosis and treatment before major AIDS-related complications develop.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between “confidential” and “anonymous” testing?

Confidential testing means that the results of any HIV test performed will not be revealed to anybody except designated clinic staff, and in some cases, specific public health officials. Confidential testing will usually require a person to give their details (name, age, address) to the clinic performing the test.

At Heartland CARES, a person who requests anonymous testing is given a unique identifying code. No official record of that person being tested will be made and no identifying details will be passed on to public health authorities in case of a positive result.

What does a Reactive test result indicate? A Non-Reactive test result?

A Reactive test result means that HIV antibodies may have been detected in the specimen. The test is interpreted as preliminary positive. As with all screening tests, the results must be confirmed by another method, known as a confirmatory test. If the initial oral screening is reactive (positive), with your permission, the staff at Heartland CARES will collect a testing specimen from you before you leave the clinic to use in the confirmatory testing process. The results of the confirmatory test usually are available within 7 to 10 days.

A Non-Reactive test means that anti-HIV antibodies were not detected in the specimen. This test result is interpreted as Negative.

Are all negatives true negatives?

A Non-Reactive (negative) test means that anti-HIV antibodies were not detected in the specimen. This test result is interpreted as Negative.

It is possible to get a negative screening test if the infection is very recent. This may be because there is a window period of several weeks when a person may be infected but antibodies to the virus have not reached a concentration that is visible. Therefore, if a person has certain risk factors, or thinks they may have been exposed to HIV, they need to be retested in three months to be certain of a negative result. The staff at Heartland CARES will instruct you on risk-reduction measures to use in the meantime to keep yourself and your partners safe.

What is a false-positive?

A false-positive is when a test returns a preliminary positive result that is later determined (through a confirmatory test) to be inaccurate. False-positives are rare, but are a natural and expected occurrence with all diagnostic products, including pregnancy tests, cholesterol tests and cancer tests.

Is HIV transmitted through saliva? How can you test for HIV using oral fluid if HIV cannot be transmitted through saliva and kissing?

The CDC has determined, and multiple supporting studies confirm, that HIV transmission does not occur through saliva. However, rapid HIV test used by Heartland CARES does not use saliva, but rather absorbs antibodies directly from the blood vessels in the mucous membranes of the mouth. This test detects antibodies for HIV, not the virus itself.

The test draws out HIV antibodies, if they are present, from the tissues of the cheek and gum. The mucous membranes have a much higher amount of antibodies than saliva.