

Routine HIV testing

Emergency Department (A&E) and Urgent Care Centre

This leaflet provides information on having a routine HIV test in the Guy's and St Thomas' Emergency Department (A&E) and Urgent Care Centre.

If you require a blood test whilst in our A&E, we will look for HIV infection in your blood.



Why am I being tested for HIV?

HIV is now a long term manageable medical condition and it is important to diagnose this condition as early as possible for the best outcomes on treatment.

Guy's and St Thomas' in line with NICE national best practice, tests patients who are over 16 years old when they attend the Emergency Department or the Urgent Care Centre.

We believe this is the safest approach as many people do not realise they have been at risk of HIV infection and symptoms can take many years (sometimes many decades) to develop.

Will I get my result if the test is negative?

No – we will not contact you if your results are negative for HIV infection.

What happens if my HIV test is positive?

If your routine test is positive (reactive or needs further testing), we will contact you directly and ask you to come to the hospital to repeat the HIV test and confirm your diagnosis. You will be seen by a team of HIV specialists who have many years experience managing people living with HIV.

Testing positive is often a shock but it is much worse for your health to live with HIV that is not being treated. The drug therapy for HIV is extremely safe and effective and allows your body to repair the damage to your immune system.

Sometimes the result is 'equivocal' which means it is neither definitely positive nor negative. In this case we must also see you again to repeat the test.

What if I don't want to know my HIV status?

Many people do not realise they have been at risk of infection, which is why it is so important for us to test as many people as possible. It is always much better to have the HIV test and check if you need life-saving treatment.

However, if you decide you don't want to know your HIV status:

In the Emergency Department (A&E): please speak to a member of staff who will make sure we cancel your HIV test.

In the Urgent Care Centre: you can simply decline the test and you will not be tested for HIV

If you are worried about getting a positive result or have further questions, we can arrange for you to see one of our health advisors for a more in-depth discussion. To make an appointment with our health advisors please contact them on **020 7188 3517** or **020 7188 7707** or visit our page on the Trust website: www.gstt.nhs.uk/our-services/sexual-health.

What if my contact details change?

It is important that we have your correct contact details in case we need to speak to you about your test. Please ensure we have recorded the correct contact details, and if they change in the week following your test, let us know by calling **020 7188 2120** so we can update your records.

Does having an HIV test affect my ability to get life insurance or a mortgage?

No - having a negative HIV test has no effect on getting life insurance or a mortgage.

Even in the case of a positive result you should not have difficulty getting personal medical insurance, loans or mortgages. Insurance companies have understood for many years that HIV is a long-term health condition and that people do very well on treatment (with almost normal life expectancies).

Useful sources of information

Terrence Higgins Trust

Terrence Higgins Trust is the leading and largest HIV and sexual health charity in the UK, able to offer advice and support for sufferers of HIV and their families.

t: 0808 802 1221 **e:** info@ttht.org.uk

w: www.ttht.org.uk

National Aids Map (NAM)

NAM provides useful information on HIV and AIDS.

t: 020 7837 6988 **e:** info@nam.org.uk

w: www.aidsmap.com

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about routine HIV testing, please contact our health advisors on 020 7188 3517 or 020 7188 7707 or visit our page on the Trust website www.gstt.nhs.uk/our-services/sexual-health

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.gstt.nhs.uk/leaflets

Further information

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815

e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

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