

# HIV Testing Recommendations

## Before Testing

Clinical indications to prompt an HIV test include:



Suspected acute HIV infection (AHI)

- Flu-like illness starting one to four weeks after a potential HIV exposure
- Order both laboratory-based 4th generation HIV test and viral load



Whenever sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing is done on a client who is not known to have HIV



Pregnancy

- At the first prenatal visit
- During the third trimester



Tuberculosis (TB) or COVID-19

- TB or COVID-19 infection
- Suspected TB or COVID-19

## Routine HIV Testing

Routine HIV testing is a part of good medical care.

Perform routine HIV testing every year if the client or their partner:

- Is sexually active and has had condomless penetrative (anal or vaginal) sex with a new partner since the client's most recent HIV test
- Has had any new STI within the last 12 months

Perform routine HIV testing every three to six months if the client or their partner:

- Is a man who has sex with men
- Injects drugs, hormones or cosmetic fillers
- Exchanges sex for money, drugs or housing
- Has a sex partner living with HIV whose viral load is unknown or consistently unsuppressed

## After Testing

If a client tests positive for HIV, health care providers can talk to them about HIV and immediate antiretroviral treatment (iART).

Ultimately it is the client's decision whether they are ready to start HIV treatment. However, providers can help inform the decision by describing the goal and benefits of HIV treatment, and discussing how:



- Medicines to treat HIV are **safer and more effective** than ever.
- HIV treatment can lower the amount of virus in the body to levels so low that the virus is undetectable. The sooner a person with HIV starts treatment, the less HIV can damage their body.
- People who maintain an undetectable viral load cannot pass the virus through sex. This is known as **Undetectable = Untransmittable (U = U)**.
- Starting HIV treatment **today** and taking medicines as prescribed will **make the virus undetectable faster**.

**In addition, providers can discuss with clients:**

- How lab results might require a change in ART regimen
- How clients should reach out to their providers if side effects or other issues make it difficult for them to take their medicines every day
- The role of viral load monitoring and follow-up visits