

# Tips & Tricks for HIV Self-Testing



## My Test

## Thanks for Ordering an HIV Self-Test Kit from MyTest!

**Need support? Have questions about the HIV self-test, HIV in general, or need support accessing services?** Reach out to a MyTest Buddy.

**MyTest Buddies** are available by phone, text and email to offer peer support and guidance about how to use an HIV self-test correctly. They can also connect you to resources such as confirmatory testing and HIV prevention tools.

Toll Free Call/Text: **1-877-607-2272**  
Email: [buddies@cbrc.net](mailto:buddies@cbrc.net)

## How Can I Prepare for Taking the HIV Self-Test?

- Watch an instructional video, read the directions carefully, and review this pamphlet.
- Consider talking to a friend, a healthcare provider, or a MyTest Buddy.
- Find a safe environment and make a plan for what you will do after your test.
- You may want to do the test alone, or you may want someone you trust to be with you.
- Knowing your HIV status is best for your health and the health of your sexual partners, but there are important legal obligations about HIV disclosure if you test positive for HIV.

**You are welcome to connect with a MyTest Buddy anytime. They can provide support before, during or after you use the test.**

## Getting Started

- If the test is cold or hot from being outside, let it get to room temperature before use.



**2SLGBTQ+  
friendly video**



**Manufacturer's  
instruction video**

- Watch one of the instructional videos and go over the instruction sheet carefully before using the test. Visit: [www.my-test.ca](http://www.my-test.ca) or scan the QR code.
- Have a clean tissue available to wipe your finger if needed.
- Open the bandage so it's out of the package and ready to use.
- Read the result in a well lit area - even if the dot(s) are faint, it is a valid result.
- **Not using enough blood is the most common issue people have.**

## Collecting the Blood Sample

- Dry your hands very well after washing them. Damp hands can make it harder to get the blood sample to drop into bottle #1.
- Remove the cap from bottle #1 before pricking your finger.
- Massage your finger towards the tip before the finger prick. Once you've pricked your finger, you can continue to massage it to help with the blood flow.
- Use a full drop of blood when testing. To get the blood into bottle #1, gravity and patience can help! Once the blood drop is big/heavy enough, it will fall down. Avoid scraping your finger on the bottle.
- Once you add the blood sample to bottle #1, the liquid should be a similar colour to its red cap. If the liquid is pale red, add an extra drop of blood. Most invalid results are from not using enough blood.

## Reading the Results

- Look at the test in a well lit area. Even if the dot(s) are faint, it is a valid result.
- Review the instruction sheet included in the test package for details about reading the results.
- If your results are invalid or you're not sure, you can try another HIV self-test, or see a healthcare provider and get a standard HIV test. Visit [where.to.catie.ca](http://where.to.catie.ca) to find HIV testing options near you.

**If your test results are positive, negative, or invalid - you're welcome to reach out to a MyTest Buddy for peer support.**

**After a positive result, the next step to access treatment is a confirmatory HIV test with a healthcare provider with your informed consent. You will receive additional counselling and information about whether your name will be reported to Public Health authorities.**

HIV stigma exists within our communities and decisions about disclosure of HIV status are complex and have legal implications. While legally you do not have to tell most people you are living with HIV, the criminal law says that, in certain circumstances, you must tell your sex partners that you have HIV before you have sex. For legal information, please contact the HIV Legal Network.

**[info@hivlegalnetwork.ca](mailto:info@hivlegalnetwork.ca) +1 416-595-1666**



## When Should I use an HIV Self-Test?

No test can detect HIV immediately. The time between when you may have been exposed to HIV and when a test can tell that you have HIV is called the window period. The HIV self-test detects HIV antibodies (the body's immune response), not the virus itself. It can take 3 to 12 weeks for a person's body to make enough antibodies for the HIV self-test to detect.

**If you are concerned about a specific incident in the last 72 hours, go to the ER for HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), which is a highly effective way to prevent HIV after being exposed.**

## Pass it On!

- Let people know they can order up to 4 HIV self-tests here: [www.my-test.ca](http://www.my-test.ca)
- Help us spread the word by sharing information through social media.
- Use the tests yourself, re-test as needed, or pass them on to others.

MyTest is an HIV self-testing initiative delivered by and for 2SLGBTQIA+ people. MyTest is led by the Community-Based Research Centre (CBRC), a national 2SLGBTQIA+ health organization, in partnership with Grindr for Equality. MyTest is made possible with the support of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

**My  
Test**

