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HIV Testing

When preparing to take any test or exam one might experience a number of emotions ranging from fear, nervousness, to strong anxiety. These emotions are also quite common when it comes to taking an HIV test, but the more often one takes an HIV test the less fearful the experience becomes. Currently there are three types of HIV Tests that are easily accessible through local clinics or private physicians.

- HIV Antibody test (3rd Generation HIV Test) Rapid Oral quick
- HIV Antibody/Antigen Test (4th Generation Test) Alere Determine, INSI
- HIV RNA Test (NAT or NAAT)

The collection method for 4th generation test is small blood sample collected via finger prick. 3rd generation tests have the options of blood sample or oral fluid. Both 3rd and 4th generation tests provide same day results. Each test takes 20 minutes to process with the exception of the INSI test which takes only one minute to process. The RNA test sample is collected intravenously, and is usually sent out for processing which may take up to two weeks.

Any of these tests would be a great tool for finding out ones current status. 3rd generation tests have a window period of 3-12 weeks and can only see antibodies. The 4th generation test can recognize both antigens and antibodies and have a window period of 2-6 weeks. The window period is 2-6 weeks for the RNA test.

Any individual who is sexually active should test annually to every six months, and request their sexual partners to do the same.

References:

U.S Department of Health and Human Services (2017). HIV Testing. Retrieved from: <https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv-aids/fact-sheets/1947/hiv-testing>

Copeland Care PrEP Clinic

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

What is PrEP?

The word PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis which means to prevent or control the spread of an infection or disease. The main goal of PrEP is to prevent HIV infection. This is done by taking a pill (Truvada) which is composed of two drugs (Emtricitabine/Tenofovir disoproxil fumarate) daily. This is the same medication used to stop the virus from growing in people who are already infected.

Who can take PrEP?

PrEP is mainly for people who are considered at risk – High risk negatives (person in a relationship with someone who is HIV positive, sex worker, someone sleeping with multiple people, MSM); a woman who wants to get pregnant by a HIV positive partner; and injection drug users.

As recommended by the CDC (Preexposure prophylaxis for the prevention of HIV infection in the U.S. practice guideline and providers' supplement, 2014) the following are indications for PrEP use by MSM, Heterosexually Active Men and Women, and Injecting Drug Users.

Recommended Indications for PrEP Use by MSM

- Adult man
- Without acute or established HIV infection
- Any male sex partners in past 6 months
- Not in a monogamous partnership with a recently tested, HIV-negative man AND at least one of the following:
- Any anal sex without condoms (receptive or insertive) in past 6 months
- Any STI diagnosed or reported in past 6 months
- Is in an ongoing sexual relationship with an HIV-positive male partner

Recommended Indications for PrEP Use by Heterosexually Active Men and Women

- Adult person
- Without acute or established HIV infection
- Any sex with opposite sex partners in past 6 months
- Not in a monogamous partnership with a recently tested HIV-negative partner AND at least one of the following:
- Is a man who has sex with both women and men (behaviorally bisexual)
- Infrequently uses condoms during sex with 1 or more partners of unknown HIV status who are known to be at substantial risk of HIV infection (IDU or bisexual male partner)
- Is in an ongoing sexual relationship with an HIV-positive partner

Recommended Indications for PrEP Use by Injection Drug Users

- Adult person
- Without acute or established HIV infection
- Any injection of drugs not prescribed by a clinician in past 6 months AND at least one of the following:

Any sharing of injection or drug preparation equipment in past 6 months

- Been in a methadone, buprenorphine, or suboxone treatment program in past 6 months
- Risk of sexual acquisition

Source: CDC, *Preexposure prophylaxis for the prevention of HIV infection in the U.S. practice guideline and providers' supplement, 2014*

Where can you access PrEP?

There are several ways to locate your nearest PrEP clinic. You can go to the following links: <https://prelocator.org> or <https://www.greaterthan.org/new-national-directory-prep-providers/>.

In the Montgomery area, PrEP is offered at Copeland Care Clinic. Please visit <http://www.maoui.org/> for more information about our PrEP clinic. You can also contact our PrEP Coordinator, Bretia Gordon at (334) 280-3349.