

HIV 1/2 Antigen & Antibodies, 4th Gen with Reflexes

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the cause of AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). HIV screening tests detect the HIV antigen (p24) and/or HIV antibodies produced in response to an HIV infection in the blood.

How is the test performed?

The combination HIV antibody and HIV antigen test is the recommended screening by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is available only as a blood test. The blood test detects the HIV antigen, called p24, plus antibodies to HIV-1 and HIV-2. (HIV-1 is the most common type found in the United States, while HIV-2 has a higher prevalence in parts of Africa.) If the initial test is positive, then it must be followed by a second test, called a reflex test, to establish a diagnosis. This second test is an antibody test that is different than the first test. If the second test does not agree with the first test, then a third test is performed that detects the genetic material (RNA) of the virus. An HIV RNA test will detect HIV in most people within 1-4 weeks after infection.

Who should be tested for HIV?

The CDC recommends testing for HIV for anyone who is 13 to 64 years old at least once, but some people should be tested more often, including:

- People who have had unprotected sex with more than one partner since the last HIV test
- Men who have sex with men
- Injection drug users and their sex partners
- People who exchange sex for money or drugs
- Sex partners of people who are HIV+
- People who are using Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) medication

Is HIV curable?

There is no cure for HIV, but early treatment can help. Many people with HIV live long, healthy lives by visiting their doctors for routine checkups and taking medication to prevent HIV from developing into AIDS.

What should I do if my results are positive or negative?

It is always recommended you meet with a health care provider to determine what your laboratory test results mean to you. Your health care provider will review all of your test results and, combined with your health history, will be able to provide an accurate picture of your health status.

If your results were positive: Since the HIV test requires a reflex test for confirmation, a person with a positive result is considered to be infected with HIV.

If your results were negative: A negative test for HIV antigen and/or HIV antibody usually indicates that a person does not have an HIV infection. A negative screening test means only that there is no evidence of disease at the time of the test, however it is important for those who are at increased risk of HIV infection to have screening tests performed on a yearly basis to check for possible exposure to the virus.

What other resources are available to learn more about my health and laboratory tests?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov
- Lab Tests Online: labtestsonline.org
- Quest Diagnostics: questdiagnostics.com

DLO Direct offers direct access to laboratory testing for informational purposes. A DLO Direct lab test result is not a medical diagnosis and is not intended as medical advice. Only a healthcare provider can interpret lab results and diagnose a medical condition or disease.

Because tests have not been ordered by a healthcare provider, third party entities, including Medicare and Medicaid, will not reimburse for these tests.



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