



**Ask Dr. C...HIV and healthcare advice**  
*Helping to keep you in the know with up-to-date information*  
 by Frederick Cruickshank ~ Medical Director

of HIV, these antibodies cannot fight off the infection, but their presence is used to tell whether a person has HIV in his or her body. In other words, most HIV tests look for the HIV antibodies rather than looking for HIV itself. While most common HIV tests use blood to detect HIV infection, there are tests that use saliva. The blood tests can be a finger prick or a blood draw. The tests that use saliva are just a mouth swab.

Some tests take a few days for results, but rapid HIV tests can give results in about 20 minutes.

All positive HIV tests must be followed up by another test to confirm the positive result. Results of this confirmatory test can take a few days to a few weeks. At Rosedale, we offer free testing! Feel free to come in any day of the week for a free test and opportunity to talk to one of our trained healthcare professionals. We do have both oral and blood tests. So, please do not let a fear of getting blood work stop you from knowing your status.

**Why recommend HIV testing for all pregnant women?**

— Sally from Gastonia

HIV can be passed from mother to child during pregnancy. It is important to identify a mother's HIV positive status early in the pregnancy because antiviral therapy can improve the mother's health

and greatly reduce the chance of passing the virus on to her child. The treatment is most effective for babies when started as early as possible during pregnancy. However, there are still great health benefits to beginning treatment, even during labor or shortly after the baby is born.

CDC recommends HIV screening for all pregnant women because risk-based testing (when the healthcare provider offers an HIV test based on the provider's assessment of the pregnant woman's risk) misses many women who are infected with HIV. HIV testing provides an opportunity for infected women to find out that they are infected and to gain access to medical treatment that may help improve their own health. This also allows for an educational opportunity for women who are not HIV positive to reduce their risk behaviors in the future.

**I had sex with a partner that I know is HIV positive and the condom broke, what should I do?**

— Alex from Charlotte

If it has been less than 72 hours since the condom broke, you may be able to take medication that could keep you from getting infected with HIV from your HIV positive partner. This preventative treatment is called post-exposure prophylaxis or PEP. You can call your doctor or

health department and ask for the medication. Also, you can call us at Rosedale so that we can help you access the medication. Often times there are patient assistance programs through the drug companies that make the medication to help with cost. If it has been longer than 72 hours, PEP will not protect you from possibly contracting HIV and you will need to explore HIV testing options. You can always come to Rosedale for a free HIV test and counseling! In most cases, you will have to wait 2 weeks after possible exposure before an HIV test can show accurate results.

*It should be noted that Alex was contacted as soon as we received his email, and was able to successfully receive PEP treatment.*

Always remember that this is an advice column based on your questions and the best possible knowledge out there. We need your questions to help educate the community, so email them to [info@rosedaleid.com](mailto:info@rosedaleid.com) and be sure to include a first name and location. All respondents will remain anonymous. We will try to do our best to answer, educate and inform from your responses to this column.

**Don't forget to visit our website at [rosedaleid.com](http://rosedaleid.com) and friend us on Facebook for community and clinical updates.**

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After many successful installments of "Ask Dr. C" in the past, Rosedale wants to bring back this opportunity to offer our readers information about HIV from basic questions to in-depths explanations. The questions have provided us a forum to debunk myths and remove stigma from those living with HIV and AIDS. It is important to educate yourself, get tested, and protect yourself! Send your questions to [info@rosedaleid.com](mailto:info@rosedaleid.com). Dr. C looks forward to responding to as many emails as possible.


**How do HIV tests work? Do I have to get my blood drawn?**

— Charlotte from Charlotte

Once HIV enters the body, the immune system starts to produce antibodies (chemicals that are part of the immune system that recognize invaders like bacteria and viruses and mobilize the body's attempt to fight infection). In the case

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