



Before getting tested for HIV

(To persons who are offered HIV testing in healthcare settings)

- You are going to get tested for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is a virus that damages the immune system and causes the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV infection can be considered now as a chronic disease, since early initiation of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy delays the progression of the disease and the development of AIDS.
- The only way to know if you are infected with HIV, is to get tested.
- HIV testing is always voluntary and confidential.
- You can refuse getting tested at any time.
- You can prevent the transmission of HIV infection by avoiding activities that may put you at risk. The virus is transmitted from an HIV seropositive person to another, through an unprotected sexual intercourse (anal, vaginal, oral), by sharing sharp needles, syringes, other equipment used to prepare drugs and other sharp items contaminated with blood or blood products, as well as from an HIV positive mother to her child during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.
- A negative HIV test result does not necessarily mean that you are not infected with HIV. That's because of the "HIV window period"; the period of time after a person is infected, during which a test cannot detect the infection. The window period depends on the type of the test performed. According to the national guidelines, you can get tested for HIV with an antibody screening test at least 6-8 weeks after your possible exposure to HIV. Please ask your health care provider if and when you need a follow up test, in case of an HIV negative test result.
- If the screening and the follow-up tests are positives, it means you are HIV-positive. Counseling and medical care are provided in specialized departments of hospitals (Infectious Diseases Units) by health care professionals who have experience on treating HIV. You can get further information about HIV and AIDS by contacting your physician or the HCDCP (Hellenic Center for Disease Control and Prevention).

Contact phone numbers for any information:

HCDCP in Athens: 210-5212000 (24 hours a day),
210-7222222 (09:00-21:00)

HCDCP's office in Thessaloniki: 2310-229139 (08:00-16:00)