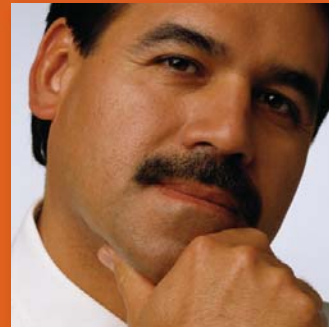
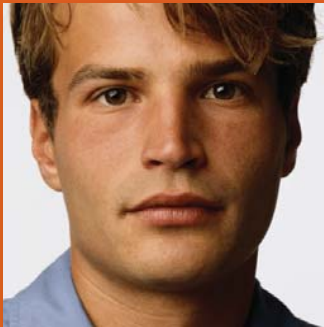


I Just Found Out...



Frequently Asked Questions About Your HIV Test in Rhode Island

I just found out that I got a
“preliminary positive” on a
rapid test.

Do I have HIV?

The rapid test is very accurate. If your test is a preliminary positive, it suggests HIV antibodies were found in your blood, and you are likely to be infected with HIV. Anyone who gets a positive result on a rapid test must have a second test done. This is an even more accurate test, and it is done to confirm or check the results of the rapid test. It takes up to one to two weeks to get the results of this second test.

Where and how can I get confirmatory testing?

Anyone who has a positive rapid test must get another test to confirm the results. If you have not yet had this second test, ask your doctor for a list of places that offer confirmatory testing. Contact the **Rhode Island HIV/AIDS Hotline** at (800) 726-3010 (Spanish spoken. M-Th 9am-8pm; F 9am-5pm) or visit www.health.ri.gov/hiv/testingsites.php on the web.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Your Medical Health

I just learned that I am HIV positive. Do I have AIDS?

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS is the most serious outcome of HIV infection. Being HIV positive is not the same as having AIDS, but it means that you may develop AIDS in the future. HIV attacks your immune system, gradually harming the way it functions. Your immune system protects your body from harmful germs like viruses or bacteria. Over time, if your immune system becomes seriously damaged by HIV, your body loses its ability to fight certain infections and cancers. AIDS occurs once the immune system has been significantly damaged. You will need to have more medical tests to determine how strong your immune system is and if you have AIDS.

Am I going to die?

A positive HIV test is scary news, but it is not a death sentence. Many people live full lives with HIV, and they are alive and well many years after getting infected. A positive HIV test result is an important medical message. Finding out that you have HIV gives you the chance to get the medical care you need, take control of your health, and slow or prevent some of the possible health effects of HIV.

Where can I get the HIV care I need?

You should find a doctor who specializes in HIV treatment and see this doctor regularly for check-ups of your immune system. Unless you already





have an advanced form of HIV disease, this care is mainly preventive—to keep the disease from getting worse. You do not need to stop seeing your regular doctor—they can talk with your HIV doctor about the best ways to take care of your medical needs.

Where to Find HIV Medical Care:

- **The Immunology Center at The Miriam Hospital**
164 Summit Ave., Providence, RI 02906
(401) 793-2928 / www.lifespan.org/tmh
Spanish spoken. Interpretation services available. M-Th 8:30am-12:30pm & 1:30pm-4:30pm; F 8:30am-3pm.
- **Roger Williams Medical Center**
825 Chalkstone Ave., Providence, RI 02908
(401) 456-2437 / www.rwmc.org
Spanish and Portuguese spoken. Interpretation services available.
Clinic hours: T 8:30am-noon; Nurse available M-Th 9am-5pm.
- **Rhode Island Hospital – HIV Clinic**
593 Eddy St., APC Bldg. 5th Floor, Providence, RI 02903
(401) 444-1678 / www.lifespan.org/rih
Interpretation services available. M, W 8am-noon.
- **Thundermist Health Center**
450 Clinton St., Woonsocket, RI 02895
(401) 767-4100 / www.thundermisthealth.org
Spanish spoken. M-W 8:30am-8:30pm; Th-F 8:30am-5pm; Sat 9am-noon.
- **CCAP Family Health Services Health Center**
1090 Cranston St., Cranston, RI 02920
(401) 943-1981 / www.comcap.org
Khmer spoken. Interpretation services available. M-F 9am-4pm.

- **Coastal Medical**

400 Reservoir Ave., #1D, Providence, RI 02907

(401) 781-2400 / www.coastaldocs.com

M-F 9am-4:30pm.

For children, teens and young adults up to age 24:

- **The Pediatric and Adolescent HIV Clinic at Hasbro Children's Hospital**
("The Pedi II Clinic")

593 Eddy St., Providence, RI 02903

(401) 444-8360 / www.lifespan.org/hch

Interpretation services available. Clinic hours: T 1pm-5pm.

For Veterans only:

- **Providence VA Medical Center**

830 Chalkstone Ave., Providence, RI 02908

(401) 273-7100; (866) 363-4486 / www.providence.va.gov

Interpretation services available. Clinic hours: M-F 8am-4:30pm.

In addition to the HIV medical care agencies listed, you can also find a directory of private providers in your area by searching on the **American Academy of HIV Medicine's** website at www.aahivm.org or the **HIV Medicine Association's** website at www.hivma.org.

I hear that HIV care and medicines are expensive, and I don't have health insurance. Does that mean I cannot get the care I will need to stay healthy?

HIV care and treatment are expensive and are necessary to stay healthy, but there are services to help people who don't have insurance. There are ways to get free or low-cost care. Here are some options:





- **Financial Advocates for Patients:** Hospitals and clinics have financial advocates—people who can help you explore your payment options. If you do not have any insurance, they can help you apply for state assistance (Medicaid, RIte Care, RIteShare). If you don't qualify for any of those, most hospitals offer financial assistance based on income.
- **Rhode Island AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP):** This program helps to cover the cost of HIV medicines if you are uninsured or underinsured. To find out if you qualify, contact ADAP at (401) 222-4610 or visit www.health.ri.gov/hiv/ryanwhite.php and www.atdn.org/access/states/ri/ri.html to get more information.
- **Clinical Trials:** Clinical trials are health research studies. They are an option for people who are interested and who medically qualify. These studies often pay for HIV medicines and HIV medical care in full. Ask your doctor about this option or visit:
 - > **AIDS Clinical Trial Information Service**
(800) 874-2572; TDD: (800) 243-7012 / www.aidsinfo.nih.gov
- **Dental Assistance:** Contact an AIDS service organization for more information:
 - > **Family Service – AIDS Service for All Patients (ASAP)**
55 Hope St., Providence, RI 02906
(401) 331-1350 / www.familyserviceri.org
Spanish spoken. M-F 8:30am-5:00pm.
 - > **AIDS Care Ocean State**
18 Parkis Ave., Providence, RI 02907
(401) 521-3603 / www.aidscaresos.org
Spanish spoken. M-F 8:30am-4:30pm.

Do I need to be on HIV medicines now?

You may or may not need to be on HIV medicines now. When to start taking HIV medicines depends on your overall health, the amount of HIV virus in your blood (viral load), and how well your immune system is working. You and your doctor will determine the best time to start taking the medicines. Once you begin taking HIV medicines, you may need to continue taking them for the rest of your life.

Are there any other things I need to get tested for, such as hepatitis?

It's important for people who test positive for HIV to be tested and/or vaccinated for hepatitis. Testing and vaccinations are provided at many locations across the state. It is also recommended for people who test positive for HIV to be tested for tuberculosis and STDs, such as syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia. Please ask your health care provider for more information on where to go for hepatitis testing and vaccines or contact:

- **HIV and Hepatitis Clinic – The Immunology Center at The Miriam Hospital**
2nd Floor Fain Bldg, Ste. E
164 Summit Ave., Providence, RI 02906
(401) 793-2928 / www.lifespan.org/tmh
- **HIV/HCV Clinic – Rhode Island Hospital**
593 Eddy St., APC Bldg. 5th Floor, Providence, RI 02903
(401) 444-1678 / www.lifespan.org/rih
- **Thundermist Health Center**
450 Clinton St., Woonsocket, RI 02895
(401) 767-4100 / www.thundermisthealth.org





Frequently Asked Questions:

Your Sexual and Reproductive Health

What can I do to keep HIV from spreading?

HIV is spread through contact with blood, semen, vaginal fluid, or breast milk. The most common ways that people get infected with HIV are unprotected sex or sharing of needles for drug use. HIV can also be passed from mother to infant at birth or through breastfeeding.

To prevent spreading the virus to others:

- Use a condom every time you have sex.
- Do not share needles or syringes.

HIV is **NOT** spread through everyday casual contact with people at school, work, home, or anywhere else. HIV cannot be spread through contact with tears, sweat, or saliva, or by sharing objects like cups, phones, or toilet seats. HIV is not spread through mosquito bites, coughing, or hugging someone with HIV.

If I am HIV positive, can I have sex with another HIV positive person with no risk?

Even if both partners are HIV positive, there is still some risk. You or your sex partner could pass on other sexually transmitted diseases, including other forms of HIV that make it more difficult for the doctors to treat you. It is extremely important that you protect yourself and your partner (HIV positive or not) by practicing safer sex.

Safer Sex Basics

HIV is spread through blood, semen, and vaginal fluid. Any activity that doesn't allow blood, semen, or vaginal fluids to enter a person's body is safe.

- Use a new latex condom and water-based lubricant like K-Y Jelly or Astroglide every time you have vaginal or anal sex. (This is not risk-free as a condom may break or come off.)
- Don't use oil-based lubricants with condoms. Oils in hand lotions, massage oils, Vaseline, etc. can cause the condom to leak or break.
- People who are allergic to latex can use plastic (polyurethane) condoms. These come in both male and female styles. Condoms made from animal skin do **NOT** protect against HIV.
- Lubricants containing Nonoxynol-9 (N-9) may increase the risk of HIV transmission. Do not use them.
- For oral sex use a barrier such as a latex condom, dental dam, or plastic food wrap.
- Don't share sex toys. If you do share, wash them well and cover them with a fresh condom each time.
- The surest way to avoid spreading sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, is not to have sexual intercourse.

What about birth control and family planning?

If you are HIV positive and are not yet ready to have a baby, birth control and family planning can help you:

- Enjoy a healthy sex life while reducing the chance you will transmit HIV to your partner or children.
- Prevent unintended pregnancy and avoid the stress of an unplanned pregnancy.





- Plan desired pregnancies while minimizing the risk of HIV transmission.

Some HIV drugs and medications affect how well birth control pills or other birth control methods work, so it is important to talk to your doctors about your HIV medicines, the birth control method you are currently using, and what other methods might be available to you.

To find out more about birth control and family planning, contact:

- **Rhode Island Department of Health Title X Family Planning Program**
(800) 942-7434 / www.health.ri.gov/familyplanning/index.php
- **United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island**
Dial 2-1-1 using your phone or visit www.211ri.org on the web.

How do I talk to my partner or a future partner about HIV and safer sex?

Telling a partner you have HIV or that you want to have safer sex can be scary, confusing, and embarrassing. You may fear being rejected or left alone. But sooner or later, it will be important to talk about HIV with your partner. The longer you wait, the harder it gets. If you talk with your partner before you get into a situation where HIV could be spread, then you and your partner can make choices together about safer sex.

Here are some things to think about before you tell someone that you're HIV positive:

- Think about how you would like to have this information told to you, if you were the partner.
- Get support and advice on talking to partners from your HIV doctor, counselor, peer leader, or case manager.

- Telling your partner you have HIV may bring on a strong reaction. Be sure that you have support regardless of how your partner responds
- If you are going to be in a situation where HIV could be spread, practice safer sex. This is the single most important thing you can do.
- If you feel unsafe telling your partner, talk to your HIV doctor, counselor, or case manager. Contact one of the agencies in the Support Services section of this Guide.
- For more information about Partner Services, contact Zoanne Parillo at (401) 639-6315. This is a Department of Health program that will inform the individuals at risk without telling them your name.

Who can I talk to if I don't feel safe at home?

Domestic violence programs and hotlines provide support and assistance to anyone who faces violence, threats, or abuse at home or from a partner. These programs can help with crisis intervention, safety planning, information about domestic violence, and referrals to local service providers. Domestic violence programs and hotlines in Rhode Island are listed below. All services are confidential, and there are services available to everyone, including people in same-sex relationships, males, people with disabilities, and immigrants.

- **Rhode Island Victims of Violence Hotline**
(800) 494-8100
Spanish spoken. Interpretation services available.
- **Sojourner Domestic Violence Hotline**
386 Smith St., Providence, RI 02908
(401) 658-4334 / www.sojournerri.org
Resource center is available M-F 9am-5pm.





- **Day One – The Sexual Assault & Trauma Resource Center**
100 Medway St., Providence, RI 02906
(401) 421-4100 ext. 121 / www.dayoneri.org
Spanish spoken. M-F 9am-5pm.
- **Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center**
P.O. Box 5643, Pawtucket, RI 02862
(401) 723-3057 / www.bvadvocacycenter.org
Spanish and Portuguese spoken.
- **Women's Resource Center**
114 Touro St., Newport, RI 02840
24-hour hotline: 401-847-2533; (866) 236-2474; Office: (401) 846-5263 / www.wrcnbc.org
Spanish spoken. Counseling and services available M-F 9am -5pm.
- **Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County**
61 Main St., Wakefield, RI 02879
(401) 782-3990; (866) 782-3990 / www.wrcsc.org
Italian spoken. Interpretation services available. Drop-in center open M-F 9am-5pm.
- **Women's Center of Rhode Island**
P.O. Box 603300, Providence, RI 02906
(401) 861-2760 / www.womenscenterri.org
Spanish, Portuguese, and Cape Verdean spoken.
- **Elizabeth Buffum Chase House and Domestic Violence Hotline**
P.O. Box 9476, Warwick, RI 02889
(401) 738-1700; Counseling line: (401) 738-9700 / www.ebccenter.org

If I am HIV positive, does this mean that I can never have children?

HIV positive people can have children, but having a baby is a decision to make very carefully. HIV can be passed to the baby during pregnancy, at birth, or after birth through breastfeeding. For HIV positive people with HIV negative partners, having unprotected sex can put both the partner and the baby at risk for becoming infected with HIV. If you are an HIV positive woman who wants to have a baby, it is very important to take all the steps to ensure that the amount of HIV virus in your body is as low as possible before birth. If you are an HIV positive man, there are special techniques to remove HIV from the sperm. Seeing an obstetrician (pregnancy doctor) who specializes in HIV care is the most important thing you can do to increase the chance that your baby will be born healthy and free of HIV. Visit www.womenchildrenhiv.org on the web to learn more.

To find out more about birth control and family planning, contact:

- **Rhode Island Department of Health Title X Family Planning Program**
(800) 942-7434 / www.health.ri.gov/familyplanning/index.php
- **United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island**
Dial 2-1-1 using your phone or visit www.211ri.org on the web.

I am HIV positive and already pregnant. Will my baby be positive?

No one can tell for sure if your baby will be born with HIV. There is always a chance. Take the following steps to minimize the risk. Get medical care for HIV in addition to your regular OB/GYN care.





- You will need to take certain medicines to get the amount of HIV as low as possible in your body before delivery.
- Your baby will need to be on HIV medicines for the first few weeks/months of its life and see a specialist in an HIV pediatric clinic listed below.
- You should not breastfeed if you are HIV positive, as HIV can be passed through breast milk.

For Specialty HIV OB/GYN care contact:

- **The Immunology Center at The Miriam Hospital**
164 Summit Ave., Providence, RI 02906
(401) 793-2928 / www.lifespan.org/tmh
Spanish spoken. Interpretation services available. M-Th 8:30am-12:30pm
& 1:30pm-4:30pm; F 8:30am-3pm.

For Specialty HIV Pediatric care contact:

- **The Pediatric and Adolescent HIV Clinic at Hasbro Children's Hospital**
("The Pedi II Clinic")
593 Eddy St., Providence, RI 02903
(401) 444-8360 / www.lifespan.org/hch
Interpretation services available. Clinic Hours: T 1pm-5pm.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Living Well with HIV

How do I take care of myself?

There are many things you can do for yourself to stay healthy. Here are some of the most important:

- See a doctor who specializes in HIV treatment.
- Follow your doctor's instructions. Talk to your doctor about your questions and concerns.
- If your doctor prescribes medicine for you, take the medicine just the way he or she tells you. Taking your medicine incorrectly gives your HIV infection more chance to fight back. If you have side effects from your medicine, call your doctor for advice—don't change how you take your medicine on your own or because of what friends tell you.
- Get immunizations (shots) to prevent pneumonia and flu.
- If you smoke or use drugs not prescribed by your doctor, consider reducing or quitting.
- Eat healthy foods. Eating well is very important because it keep you strong, your energy up, and your weight stable.
- Practice safer sex.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise helps you stay strong and relieve stress.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- Take time to relax. Many people find prayer or meditation, along with exercise and rest, helps them cope with the stress of living with HIV.





Frequently Asked Questions: **Support Services**

I just learned that I am HIV positive. Where can I get support?

Studies have shown that people who have support from others do better with living with HIV. Support can come in different ways for different people. Some people turn to a family member for support. Others tell a close friend. Other people get support from their HIV doctor or social worker.

A good person to ask for support and help is an HIV case manager. A case manager can help you to find the services you need, not just medical care but housing, transportation, nutrition, legal services, and mental health care. Talk to your doctor or social worker, or contact any of the agencies below, to discuss whether case management might be a good option for you.

Case Management Services:

- **AGAPE Center**
245 Main St., Woonsocket, RI 02895
(401) 762-4000
Spanish spoken. M-F 8:30am-4:30pm; Drop-in hours: M, W 8:30am-2:30pm.
- **AIDS Care Ocean State**
18 Parkis Ave., Providence, RI 02907
(401) 521-3603 / www.aidscaresos.org
Spanish spoken. M-F 8:30am-4:30pm.

- **Family Service – AIDS Service for All Patients (ASAP)**
55 Hope St., Providence, RI 02906
(401) 331-1350 / www.familyserviceri.org
Spanish spoken. M-F 8:30am-5:00pm.

Housing Support:

- **AIDS Care Ocean State**
18 Parkis Ave., Providence, RI 02907
(401) 521-3603 / www.aidscaresos.org

Who can I talk to about this?

Finding out you have HIV is a life-changing event. You may feel anxious, irritable, jumpy, or scared. It is normal to be angry—at yourself for taking risks; at the person you believe may have infected you; at the world. One of the most important things you can do is to find someone to talk to. Here are some options:

- **Support groups** of people living with HIV are helpful for many people. Being with others who are dealing with the same things can help you feel less alone. You may also learn new information about treatments and services. Refer to the list below to find a support group.
- **Talk with a counselor.** This is a safe way to share your feelings, and it may help you see the issues more clearly. To find a counselor, see the list below.
- **Call a hotline (telephone help service).** Hotline calls are confidential and anonymous. You can talk to them about everything without them even knowing who you are. For hotline phone numbers, see the list below.





Support Groups:

- Contact the **Rhode Island HIV/AIDS Hotline** at (800) 726-3010 (Spanish spoken. M-Th 9am-8pm; F 9am-5pm).

Counselors and Mental Health Services:

- **East Bay Mental Health Center**
2 Old County Rd., Barrington, RI 02806
(401) 246-1195; 24-hour emergency line: (401) 246-0700 / www.eastbay.org
Spanish, Portuguese, and German spoken. M-F 8am-4:30pm.
- **Providence Center for Counseling and Psychiatric Services**
528 North Main St., Providence, RI 02904
(401) 276-4000; (401) 276-4020; 24-hour emergency line: (401) 274-7111 / www.providencecenter.org
Spanish and Portuguese spoken. M-F 8am-4:30pm.
- **South Shore Mental Health Center**
4705A Old Post Rd., Charlestown, RI 02813
(401) 364-7705; (401) 789-1367 / www.ssmhc.org
Interpretation services available. M, W-F 9am-5pm; T 9am-9pm.
- **Northern Community Services**
800 Clinton St., Woonsocket, RI 02895
(401) 235-7100; (401) 235-7121; 24-hour emergency line: (401) 235-7120 / www.nricommunityservices.org
Spanish spoken. M-F 8:30am-4:30pm.
- **Riverwood Mental Health Services**
25 Railroad Ave., Warren, RI 02885
(401) 247-4278; 24-hour emergency line: (401) 490-5245 / www.riverwoodmhs.org
Spanish spoken. M-F 8:30am-4:00pm.

Hotlines (Telephone Help):

- **Rhode Island HIV/AIDS Hotline**
(800) 726-3010
Spanish spoken. M-Th 9am-8pm; F 9am-5pm.

If you ever feel at a complete loss and don't know what to do, go to an Emergency Room or call the Rhode Island Samaritan Suicide Prevention Hotline at (401) 272-4044 or (800) 365-4044. Spanish spoken.

I think I have a substance abuse problem. What should I do?

The important thing is to find the right level of care for you. Rhode Island has teen and adult substance abuse treatment programs and many levels of care, including detox, residential, intensive outpatient, and partial hospital programs. Call any program for a telephone screening to see if the program is the right level for you. If not, they will refer you to another program that can better meet your needs.

Even if you don't have health insurance, you may be able to get care. Many programs are funded by the Rhode Island Department of Health to provide services to all who are eligible based on income. Ask your HIV case manager or social worker about other programs that may be able to help you pay for substance abuse treatment.

Here are some options for substance abuse information and services:

- **Rhode Island Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence Helpline**
(866) ALC-DRUG (252-3784); (401) 725-0410 / www.ricaodd.org
- **Family Service – AIDS Service for All Patients (ASAP)**
55 Hope St., Providence, RI 02906
(401) 331-1350 / www.familyserviceri.org
Spanish spoken. M-F 8:30am-5:00pm.





- **SSTAR**
(800) RI-SOBER (747-6237) / www.sstar.org
- **Phoenix House Detox Center**
251 Main St., Exeter, RI 02822
24-hour hotline: (401) 295-0960 ext. 6443 / www.phoenixhouse.org
Spanish spoken.
- **Alcoholics Anonymous**
(401) 438-8860; (800) 439-8860; Spanish: (401) 621-9698
- **Narcotics Anonymous**
(866) NA-HELP-U (624-3578)
- **Project Link - Women & Infants Hospital**
134 Thurbers Ave., Ste. 212, Providence, RI 02905
(401) 453-7618 / www.womenandinfants.org/body.cfm?id=835&action=detail&ref=60
Spanish spoken. M-F 8am-4:30pm.

How can I prevent the spread of HIV infection if I use needles?

Always use clean needles; the safest thing is never to share your needles with others and not to reuse needles. If you must share, clean your needles with bleach and water.

ENCORE (Education, Needle Exchange, Counseling, Outreach, and Referral) is a program of the Rhode Island Department of Health and AIDS Care Ocean State. The purpose of needle exchange programs is to prevent the transmission of HIV, hepatitis C, and other blood-borne diseases by giving people harm reduction tools to lower the risk. Harm reduction tools include:

- Clean syringes (needles can also be bought at pharmacies in Rhode Island without a prescription).
- Bleach.
- Alcohol swabs, cookers, and cotton.
- Condoms and other safer sex materials.

For more information, contact:

- **ENCORE (Education, Needle Exchange, Counseling, Outreach, and Referral)**

605 Elmwood Ave., Providence, RI 02907

(401) 781-0665 / www.aidscares.org/encore.htm

M, W, F 8:30am-4:30pm; T, Th 8:30am-4:30pm & 6pm-8pm.

How do I find support specific to me?

Anyone can become HIV positive. There are many, many different “me’s” — HIV affects people of all genders, all skin colors, all sexualities, with any amount of money, from all countries, and of all ages. You can talk to your doctor, a social worker, a case manager, or any of the agencies listed in this guide to help you find the support you need.

Where can I find more information about HIV?

You can go to your local library for free internet access. The internet has a huge amount of HIV information, some good and some not-so-good. Here are some websites and phone numbers that may be helpful to you:

- **HIV/AIDS resource site for positive people**
www.thebody.com





- **Federal HIV/AIDS information and resources**
www.aids.gov
- **GLBT Helpline of Rhode Island**
www.glbthelpline.org
- **CDC Information Hotline**
(800) CDC-INFO (232-4636); TTY: (888) 232-6348 / www.cdc.gov/hiv
Staff will review health data with callers, answer health-related questions, and provide necessary referrals. Service available 24/7. Spanish spoken.
- **POZ Magazine and HIV Meds Online**
www.poz.com
- **The Gay and Lesbian National Hotline**
(888) THE-GLNH (843-4564) / www.glnh.org
M-F 4pm-midnight; Sat noon-5pm.
- **National Minority AIDS Council**
(202) 483-6622 / www.nmac.org or write to info@nmac.org
M-F 8:30am-5pm. Spanish spoken.
- **PatientsLikeMe: Patients Helping Patients Live Better Every Day**
www.patientslikeme.com
Social network and information for HIV positive people.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Are my HIV test results confidential?

Under Rhode Island law the privacy of your HIV test results is protected. The law states that “providers of health care, public health officials, and any other person who maintains records containing information on AIDS test

results of individuals shall be responsible for maintaining full confidentiality of these data... and shall take appropriate steps for their protection.”

Steps to keep HIV test records private include:

- Keeping paper records secure at all times and establishing adequate confidentiality safeguards for electronically stored records;
- Setting and enforcing reasonable rules limiting access to these records; and
- Training people who handle records to keep them secure and private.

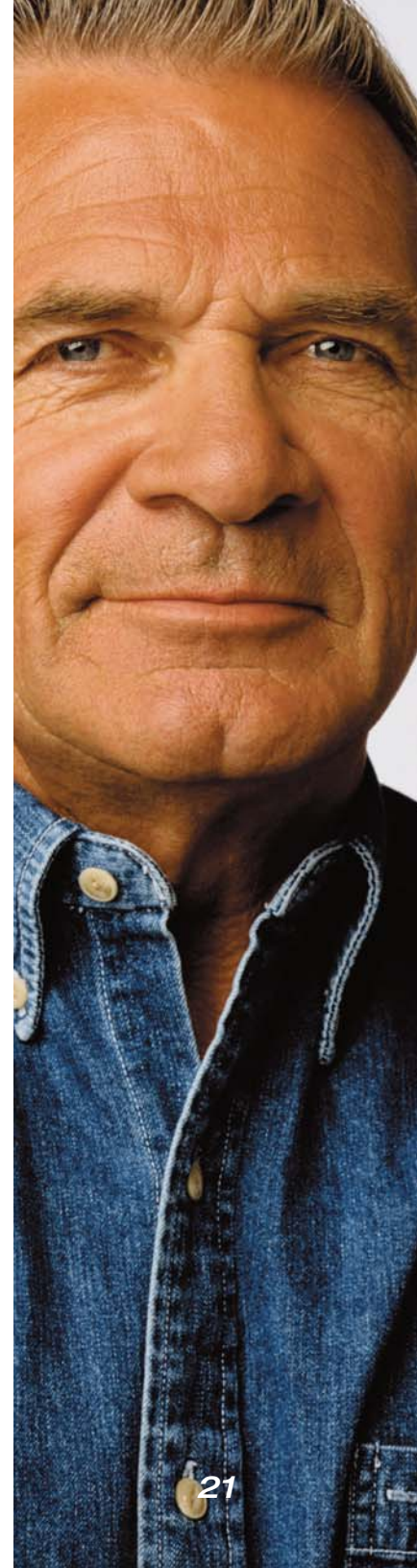
Rhode Island Department of Health regulations require that health care centers and testing sites report positive HIV test results to the Department with the patient's name, but they are kept entirely confidential. All information in connection with HIV and AIDS cases is subject to strong confidentiality protection under Rhode Island law.

Who do I have to tell?

Telling someone else that you are HIV positive can be very difficult, and there are many things to consider when telling another person. Wait until you feel ready before you tell others you have HIV. Whoever you do tell, be sure that you trust them to support you. It's a good idea to remind them that it is up to you to tell others (not them). It may take people time to accept the news.

For anyone who may have been unknowingly put at risk (for example, previous or current sexual partners) it is important to inform them so that they can get tested. Here are some options for doing this:

- **Tell the person yourself.** Your social worker or doctor can give you some ideas for how to do this.
- **Bring the person to your doctor's office.** You can tell them there, and your social worker or doctor can answer questions.





- **Use the Partner and Spousal Notification program.** Contact Zoanne Parillo at (401) 639-6315. This is a Department of Health program that will inform the individuals at risk without telling them your name.
- **If you face domestic violence,** telling a partner your HIV status may put you at even greater risk. Talk to your doctor about this issue. For more information about keeping yourself safe, contact the **Rhode Island Victims of Violence Hotline** at (800) 494-8100.

Do I have to tell my employer? Landlord? School teacher?

No, you do not have to tell your employer, landlord, or teacher—it's up to you. Take your time to decide who to tell and how you will approach them. Be sure you're ready and that you have support, whatever the person's reaction is. There are laws that protect people with HIV from discrimination in employment, housing, and education.

You may want to tell your employer if your HIV illness or treatments interfere with your job performance. If you want to tell your employer but are worried about their reaction or your job security, talk to your provider or case manager first. If you do decide to tell your employer, make sure they understand that they must keep your HIV status confidential.

If you apply for a new job, employers are not allowed to ask about your health or any disabilities. Legally, they can only ask if you have any condition that would interfere with the main job tasks.

If you have legal questions related to your HIV, you can contact:

- **GLAD Legal Information Infoline**
(800) 455-GLAD (455-4523) / www.glad.org/rights/infoline
Spanish spoken. M-F 1:30pm-4:30pm.
- **Youth Pride, Inc.**
171 Chestnut St., Providence, RI 02903
(401) 421-5626 / www.youthprideri.org

I'm under 18 years old. What's different for me?

If you are under 18 and test positive for HIV, you or your doctor should contact:

- **The Pediatric and Adolescent HIV Clinic at Hasbro Children's Hospital**
("The Pedi II Clinic")

593 Eddy St., Providence, RI 02903

(401) 444-8360 / www.lifespan.org/hch

Interpretation services available. T 1pm-5pm.

The Pedi II Clinic partners with AIDS Care Ocean State (ACOS), a local AIDS service organization, to provide comprehensive medical and support services to HIV positive children, teens, and their families. Clinic specialists can help you with problems ranging from housing and school to talking to parents or guardians. These services are available to you until you are 24 years old, by which time you will be referred to a doctor who works with adults.

Neither you nor your doctor has to tell your parents at this time. If you are worried that telling your parent or guardian that you have HIV will put you in danger at home, talk to your doctor, a case manager, or contact **Rhode Island Victims of Violence Hotline** at (800) 494-8100.

If I have children do they need to be tested?

It's very hard and frightening to think that your child might be HIV positive. Whether or not your children need to be tested for HIV depends on a number of different things, including your children's ages and at what point you were exposed to HIV. Talk to your HIV doctor about whether your children may have been infected and whether they should be tested. The doctor can help you figure out options to get the test done and any support services you may need. Even if you think your child was probably not exposed to HIV, you may still choose to get them tested for peace of mind.





What are the legal aspects of being HIV positive for immigrants? Will I be deported?

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) can keep HIV positive noncitizens out of the United States, keep you from coming back in if you leave, or keep you from changing your immigration status (to become a permanent resident). DHS can also remove noncitizens if you entered without government permission. However, DHS can choose to waive (set aside) some of these rules. To apply for and receive a waiver you must be in medical care and carefully follow all treatment recommendations. DHS will request records of all this and will ask your doctor to rate the level of health risk a person is to citizens of the United States. If you have questions about your citizenship status or about applying for a waiver, contact an immigration expert. The following non-profit immigration agencies can help guide you:

- **The International Institute of Rhode Island**
645 Elmwood Ave., Providence, RI 02907
(401) 784-8650 / www.iiri.org
- **Progreso Latino**
626 Broad St., Central Falls, RI 02863
(401) 728-5920 / www.progresolatino.org
Spanish spoken. M, W, F 8am-5pm; T, Th 8am-7pm; Sat 8am-noon.



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