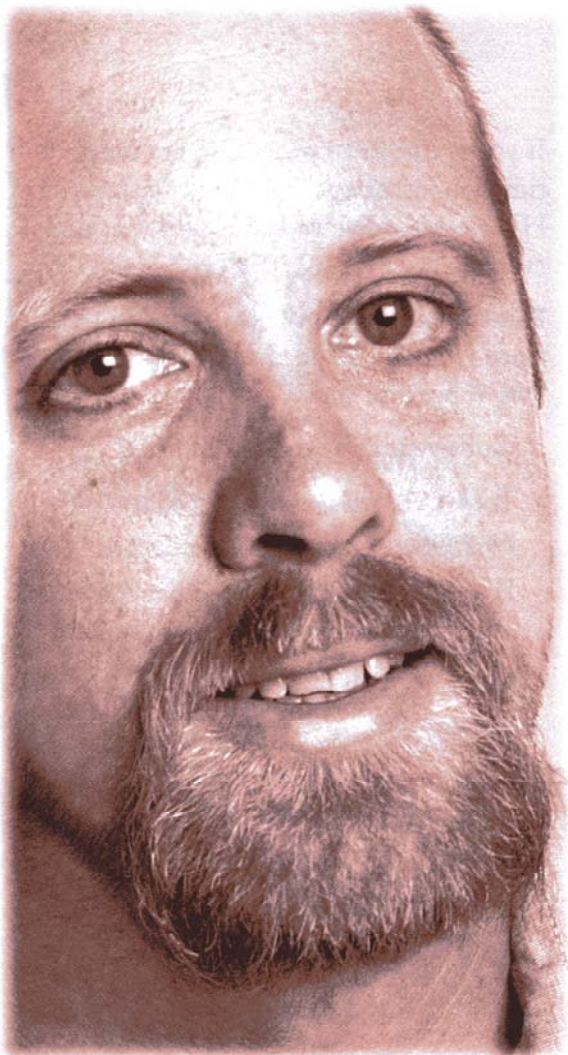


# HIV Test

## Staying Negative



# Big Time Relief!

If your HIV test was negative, you can go on with your life. You have a life, a future and a lot to plan for.

*This is a great time to make a plan to stay healthy and avoid HIV risks.*

## “Never Again!”

If you're like most people, you've been riding an emotional roller coaster over the HIV test. And you'd feel glad not to do it ever again.

**Think about what put you at risk** in the first place. You had some kind of unsafe sex. Was it because you:

- ▶ Got swept away in the moment?
- ▶ Took a risk to be with an attractive partner?
- ▶ Felt embarrassed to talk about condoms, or unsure how to bring up the topic?
- ▶ Made poor choices after drinking or using drugs?

Whatever it was, you're probably determined to avoid that kind of risk in the future.

## How Slips Happen

A lot of people decide to be safer after an HIV scare. Later, they find themselves taking risks again. What happens?

**It's usually a mix of things:**

- ▶ **Head.** People are more likely to take risks if they're lonely, anxious, depressed or bored. Or if they're happy and celebrating.
- ▶ **Heart.** When people feel strongly attracted, they may take more risks.
- ▶ **Environment.** Do friends think it's OK to have unsafe sex? Does a partner? Are people drinking or using drugs? Is it an awesome party?

Instead of putting yourself at risk for HIV again, take steps now that will help you keep your commitment to stay safe.

## Talk to Your Brain

Sexual desires come from the **feeling** part of your brain. This part wants fun, great sex and excitement.

Plans to stay free of HIV come from the **thinking** part of your brain. This part wants you to be safe and rational.

**Both parts are good.** But they need to learn to negotiate with each other. Otherwise, neither part gets what it really wants.

### It's Easy as 1-2-3

#### 1 LISTEN

Does your feeling brain say things like these about taking risks?

- ▶ "This isn't really that much of a risk."
- ▶ "No one this attractive has ever been interested in me before."
- ▶ "If I mention condoms now, I'll ruin the moment."
- ▶ "They have medicine now for HIV. It's not such a big deal."

#### Practice Now!

**Listen.** What is your feeling brain saying this very instant? ("This is a stupid pamphlet. I would never say these things.")

**Talk back** with your thinking brain. ("These are good ideas. I could try this.")

If you can balance these two parts of your brain now while reading this pamphlet, you can do it later in real life.

#### 2 TALK BACK

This feeling part of your brain is a good thing. But you need to set firm limits so it doesn't put you in danger.

Your thinking brain might say:

- ▶ "I'm not going to take risks that threaten my future."
- ▶ "Lots of people *are* staying safe and avoiding HIV risks. I can do it, too."
- ▶ "Staying safe, with no worry, will feel much better than taking this risk."
- ▶ "HIV is a serious disease. Even with all the new medicines, it's a bad deal. I'm not going to risk it."

#### 3 BE PREPARED

Carry condoms with you all the time. That way, your thinking brain can be there to save the day when your feeling brain is saying, "Right now!"

## Condoms: Your Body's Buddy

Using condoms correctly every time you have sex helps prevent HIV and many other types of STD (sexually transmitted disease).

- ▶ **Use a new latex condom every time** you have intercourse.
- ▶ **Use condoms for all types of intercourse** (vaginal, oral, anal). For oral sex on a woman, try using plastic food wrap, a latex dental dam, or a condom cut the long way so it lies flat.
- ▶ **Practice a lot.** Condoms work best for people who have experience.
- ▶ **Use water-based lubricants.** Don't use oil-based lubes such as Vaseline, hand cream or massage oil. They can make the condom break.

People who are allergic to latex can try plastic condoms.  
Some couples use the "female" style.

## Stay Safe!

Other skills will help you avoid risks, too.

Remember to:

- ▶ **Know** what you want.
- ▶ **Communicate** openly with a partner about your commitment and expectations.
- ▶ **Set your limits** and respect them.
- ▶ **Choose partners** who respect you.
- ▶ **Believe** in yourself.
- ▶ **Find friends who share your values** and support your choices.

**Sharing needles** also puts you at risk for HIV. Don't share needles for injecting drugs, tattoos, piercing or anything else.

"Talk to your brain" techniques can help you avoid taking risks with needles.

## Other Great Benefits

**When you stick with your choice to be safe you get:**

- Less chance of getting any STD, not just HIV.
- Greater peace of mind.
- A stronger sense of your own values and commitments.
- Being part of a community of people who believe in themselves and choose safer sex.

## To Learn More

**The CDC National STD and AIDS Hotlines**

800-342-AIDS (or 342-2437)

Spanish: 800-344-SIDA (or 344-7432)

Deaf Access: 800-243-7889 (TTD/TTY)

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This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

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Title No. 048