

# HIV self-testing: what you need to know



## People can test wherever and whenever they want

HIV self-testing empowers people to find out their HIV status wherever and whenever they want. Since it is easy, quick and private, people may be encouraged to take a test earlier than they would if they had to visit a health facility, potentially bringing an earlier diagnosis. Any HIV-positive result must, however, be followed up with a second test by a health-care provider to confirm the result and get linked to appropriate prevention, treatment and care.



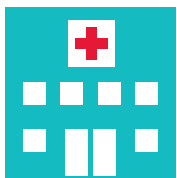
## Reducing stigma

Fear of stigma deters many people from accessing HIV testing services. HIV self-testing gives people the freedom to test anonymously, confidentially and privately.



## HIV self-testing reaches people who are left behind

HIV self-testing has been shown to reach people who would not otherwise be reached by testing services. Men, young people and members of key populations—gay men, sex workers, transgender people, people who inject drugs, prisoners and other incarcerated people and migrants—are reached in greater numbers where self-testing has been rolled out.



## Relieving the burden at health-care centres

By offering self-test kits at busy health-care centres where everyone should be tested, but resources may be lacking, only people who test positive, or people with particular concerns, need to be seen by staff in the HIV testing services at the clinic.



## No coercion

With increases in the availability of HIV self-testing comes the real risk of coercion. No one—not doctors, partners, family members, employers or anyone else—should force you to take a test. HIV testing should always be voluntary and with consent.



## On treatment? Don't self-test

Effective HIV treatment reduces the level of HIV in the blood to undetectable levels. An HIV self-test, or any other HIV test, taken while someone is on treatment could come up as negative even though the person is still HIV-positive. People should never self-test while on HIV treatment.



## Counselling is important

HIV testing should always be accompanied by counselling. People who self-test should always be informed of the various opportunities for counselling, whether it is by phone, online, by a pharmacist or in any other acceptable way.



## Be aware of other sexually transmitted infections

HIV self-tests give results only for HIV. People who take an HIV self-test should be made aware that they could be living with, and therefore be tested for, other sexually transmitted infections.



## Reaching the hard to reach

Hard-to-reach people can be better reached with self-testing. Women at an antenatal clinic or people from key populations who are visiting health-care facilities can collect self-testing kits and offer them to their partners.