

I tested
HIV negative.
Now what?



WATCHING THE WINDOW

Well done for getting tested.

You will feel relieved that you have tested negative but this does not necessarily mean you are not infected with HIV. During the early phase of infection – the **window period** – there are not enough markers in the blood to be picked up by a test.

You will therefore need to get tested again in six weeks time, particularly if you are at high risk.

STAYING NEGATIVE

People who have regular, unprotected sex with more than one partner or who share needles to inject drugs are at high risk of becoming infected with HIV.



The best ways to stay HIV negative are:

- Know your HIV status by getting tested regularly
- Don't share needles
- Always use a **new condom** correctly every time you have vaginal, anal, oral or dry sex.

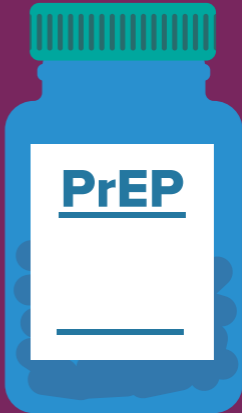
PEP AND PrEP

If you have been raped or exposed to HIV in other ways (needle stick or a broken condom), you will be offered Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). PEP is a short course of ARVs given to people who may have been exposed to HIV to prevent them from becoming HIV positive. PEP **must** be started within 72 hours and the **whole 28-day course must be finished**. If you are taking PEP, you still need to use a condom every time you have sex.



If you are at high risk of getting HIV, you may be offered Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP is a combination of two ARVs given to people who are HIV negative to prevent them from becoming HIV positive. PrEP must be taken every day as directed by the clinic. Even if you are taking PrEP, you must still use a condom every time you have sex.

PEP and PrEP can help you stay HIV negative.



REDUCING RISK

Certain types of behaviour or life experiences can put you at greater risk of getting HIV. By avoiding these, you can protect yourself from HIV.

- Avoid drugs and drinking too much alcohol
- Do not share needles if injecting drugs
- Live healthily, exercise and eat well
- Always use a condom when having sex
- Don't have 'dry' sex, always use lube
- Get checked for sexually transmitted infections
- Seek counselling if you have been raped or traumatized
- Get help if you are experiencing violence from your partner.

**National AIDS Helpline:
0800 012 322**

This information leaflet was brought to you by
NACOSA with funding from The Global Fund to
Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.



NACOSA

www.nacosa.org.za