



HIV Testing & Treatment Frequently Asked Questions

The following were questions asked by Medical Receptionists about HIV testing and treatment:

- 1. Why are gay patients more at risk for HIV? Is it because the sexual intercourse they are having? Or is it because they amount of people they are having sex with?** Both things are true; many gay men have more sexual partners, and the kind of sexual contact is sometimes more risky for HIV transmission (i.e., receptive rectal sex w/out a condom).
- 2. What sexual method (oral, vaginal, anal) is more likely to give you HIV?** The riskiest sexual practice is receptive rectal intercourse w/out a condom. This is because the anal tissue is delicate and sexual friction can cause tears, increasing contact / exposure to fluids that carry HIV.
- 3. Are patients with chlamydia or HPV more at risk for getting HIV?** Yes, especially if they are having unprotected sexual intercourse. Anytime exposure to the fluids that carry HIV are increased, so is the risk of transferring the virus. With unprotected sex, and with any compromise to the skin barrier (such as chlamydia, HPV, or any STI) the risk of transference is increased. As a reminder, the fluids that carry HIV are: blood, semen (cum), pre-semenal fluid (pre-cum), rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk.
- 4. What is the charge for treatment?**
 - a. **PrEP stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis** and is used for prevention. When folks may be exposed to HIV (possibly due to high-risk behaviors) they can take this medication to avoid converting to HIV positive, even if exposed to the virus. Medication runs about \$1200 to \$1500 per mo. It is covered by PHP/Medical/ and some private insurances
 - b. **nPEP stands for non-occupational Post-Exposure Prophylaxis** and is used when someone has been, or fears having been exposed to HIV (such as rape, use of dirty needle, etc) to prevent the virus from seroconverting in their body. In the case of nPEP, it is ESSENTIAL to get the patient in AS SOON AS POSSIBLE since medication must

begin **within 72 hours** of exposure. The price for this treatment, while high, can vary. However programs do exist to cover the expense.

- c. **HIV** It depends on the type of insurance a person has, but thanks to Ryan White funding, no person will be turned away for inability to pay. Thanks to the AIDS Drug Assistance program (ADAP), individuals who earn under 500%FPL are eligible for HIV medications, and sometimes insurance premium assistance (such as help with copay) is available.