

# HIV Testing and COVID-19

## ***Why is HIV testing important during COVID-19?***

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that underlying health conditions increase the risk for more severe illness when infected with COVID-19. This is especially true for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), an infection that prevents a person's immune system from functioning properly. Getting tested routinely for HIV is more important now than ever because when we know our status, we know how to live as healthily as possible.



## ***How do you know if you have HIV?***

Often times, there are no signs or symptoms of an HIV infection so the only way to know if you have it is to get tested.

## ***Who needs to get tested and where can you do that?***

Anyone who is or has been sexually active should get tested for HIV. Free rapid HIV tests are available through the Blue Ridge Health District, including in-home test kits that can be mailed to you!

## ***What can you do to stay healthy?***

- Use safer sex practices like condoms and lube, limit the number of partners, and know the HIV and COVID status of yourself and your partner(s).
- Get on PrEP if you are HIV negative - PrEP is a once daily medicine that helps protect your body from getting HIV. It is very effective and available from most providers, including the health department.
- Stay on your medicine if you are HIV positive - when someone has their infection under control, there is no risk of spreading HIV to partners.

**For more information:** Call Norman Dorise, Community Testing Coordinator, at (434) 989-3292 or visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/hiv.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/hiv.html)



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