

HISTORY OF HIV TESTING: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

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THE HIGHLY PERSONAL COMPONENT OF THIS SINGLE TEST AND THE IMPACT ON THE RECIPIENT; THE PRESENCE OF HIGHLY PERSONAL FEELINGS.

PRE AND POST TEST COUNSELING: THE IMPORTANCE OF BOTH, IN A CULTURE OF EVOLVING & ONGOING SEXUALITY.

GIVING NEGATIVE & POSITIVE RESULTS.

NORMALIZING HIV TESTING INTO STANDARD BLOOD WORK: CULTURAL, MEDICAL AND PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS.

THE ARRAY OF REACTIONS AND THE ROLE OF COUNSELING. BUFFETS OF JUDGEMENT FREE OPTIONS.

A HUMAN/PERSONAL TOUCH.

TIMELINE:

1985 FDA APPROVED COMMERCIAL BLOOD TEST (ELIZA) ON MARCH 2, 1985, FOR SCREENING THE BLOOD SUPPLY.

1987 FIRST WESTERN BLOT TEST KIT WAS LICENSED TO RULE OUT FALSE POSITIVES.

1992 FIRST RAPID TEST ALLOWING RESULTS IN MINUTES.

1994-1996 FIRST ORAL FLUID TEST KIT (1994) AND AT HOME SAMPLE COLLECTION KIT (1996)—SENDING SAMPLES TO A LAB.

2002 FIRST RAPID POINT OF CARE TEST (ORAQUIK) WAS APPROVED—RESULTS IN 20 MINUTES.

2006 CDC UPDATED ITS' RECCOMENDATIONS TO INCLUDE ROUTINE HIV SCREENING FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS 13-64.

2012 ORAQUIK IN HOME TEST KIT, TESTING PRIVATELY WITH AN ORAL SWAB IN THE HOME.

TEST GENERATIONS (FIVE SO FAR):

1ST GENERATION (1985): DETECTED ONLY IgG ANTIBODIES, HAD A “WINDOW PERIOD” OF 6-12 WEEKS BEFORE A POSITIVE RESULT COULD BE SEEN.

2ND & 3RD GENERATIONS (LATE 1980S-1990S): ADDED DETECTION FOR IgM AND HIV-2, REDUCING THE WINDOW PERIOD TO APPROX. 3 WEEKS.

4TH GENERATION (2010): COMBINED ANTIBODY AND P24 ANTIGEN DETECTION, ALLOWING FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF ACUTE INFECTION AS EARLY AS 2 WEEKS AFTER EXPOSURE.

5TH GENERATION (2015): DETECTS BOTH ANTIGEN AND ANTIBODIES WHILE PROVIDING SEPARATE RESULTS FOR EACH, FURTHER INCREASING DIAGNOSTIC PRECISION.

AS OF 2026:

HIV TESTING IS WIDELY ACCESSIBLE THROUGH SEVERAL METHODS:

LABORATORY BASED TESTS:

USE A BLOOD DRAW FROM A VEIN, THESE REMAIN THE MOST ACCURATE FOR DETECTING EARLY INFECTION.

POINT-OF-CARE TESTS:

USE A FINGER STICK OR ORAL SWAB; RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE IN UNDER 30 MINUTES AT CLINICS WHO PROVIDE THEM.

SELF-TESTING KITS: AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT PHARMACIES OR THROUGH MAIL-ORDER PROGRAMS FOR PRIVATE USE.