

WORLD AIDS DAY 2018 – KNOW YOUR STATUS – GET TESTED

HIV Testing – Making an informed decision.

Introduction

Considering that HIV is only transmitted in the following three ways:

- Unprotected sexual practices.
- Blood to blood
- From mother to child.



Evaluating your sexual risk

You should consider having an HIV test if:

You have engaged in unprotected (without a condom) sex with someone that you do not know the HIV status of.

Here are some key points to consider when evaluating your sexual risks

Safer Sex Means: Sexual practices, which involve the use of condoms for penetrative anal or vaginal sex, and the use of many different forms of experiencing sexual pleasure without placing people at risk of HIV transmission.

High risk sexual practices include:

- Vaginal or anal penetration without a condom
- Sharing uncovered sex toys

Some risk sexual practices include:

- Oral sex performed on a man without a condom
- Oral sex performed on a women without a barrier (Female condom) Called “CARE”
- Vaginal or anal penetrative sex with a condom - this depends on how the condom is used, its age and the type of lubrication used with it.
- Monogamy - this depends on the behaviour of your partner.

Considering your risk from Blood to Blood transmission

You should consider having an HIV test if:

- Intravenous drug use; have ever injected drugs or ever shared needles when injecting drugs.
- You have been exposed to someone’s blood or body fluids accidentally e.g. an accident or incident.
- Blood transfusions. (Since 1985 all blood is tested for HIV)
- Been exposed through unsterilized use of needles, ear piercing, razor blades, dental tools,
- Exposed through traditional circumcision where unsterilized blades have been used.

Lastly let’s consider mother to child transmission or (MTCT):

Considering that an HIV+ mother can transmit HIV to her unborn child across the placenta during pregnancy and during delivery via blood to blood transmission as well as when breast feeding her baby it is important that all pregnant women should have an HIV test. By knowing your status you can eliminate the risks of transmission of HIV to our baby through a number of interventions known as Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT).