

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### **The benefits of knowing your HIV status**

Knowing your HIV status allows you to make informed decisions about HIV prevention, treatment and care that will affect both HIV transmission and your long-term health and survival. HIV is not AIDS and it is not a death sentence. HIV is now simple and safe to treat, and treatment is easily accessible. Knowing your status allows you to take action to ensure you live a long and productive life should you be HIV positive.

### **What is an HIV self-test?**

Self-testing is a quick, convenient and confidential HIV testing option.

An HIV self-test allows you to find out your status in the privacy of your own home. HIV self-testing does not provide a final diagnosis or result. Instead, it is a screening test that shows the presence of cells and antibodies in your blood which fight HIV. A self-test is very accurate, however a positive test is required to be confirmed with another blood-based test at a medical clinic or Healthcare Professional.

### **Who should have an HIV test?**

Anyone sexually active should regularly check their HIV status.

#### **Confidentiality**

Your privacy is a primary concern to us. HIV self-testing supports patient choice and is committed to preserving confidentiality. No personal information will be shared with a third party.

For any queries, contact us on 0800 BANKMED (0800 226 5633).



### How long will it take to receive an accurate result from an HIV test?

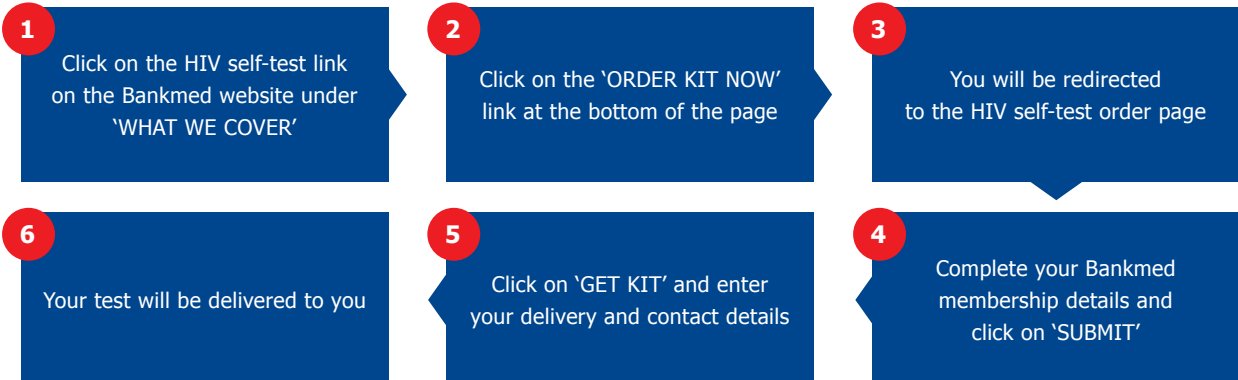
Once a person has been infected with HIV, there is a four-week gap – commonly referred to as a ‘window period’ – where the virus will not be detected by a test. The HIV self-test only tests your status from four weeks ago; if you have contracted HIV in the last four weeks, it may result in a false negative.

Should you be concerned that you have been exposed to the risk of HIV, you should not wait for the four-week window period to pass before seeking help. You should contact your local sexual health clinic or Healthcare Professional immediately and discuss your options.

### What type of risk behaviour or exposure puts me at risk for HIV?

- Unprotected sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) with multiple sex partners
- Unprotected sex with someone who is HIV positive or whose HIV status you don't know
- Using illegal injected drugs or steroids
- Sharing needles or syringes
- Having been diagnosed or treated for hepatitis, tuberculosis, or a sexually transmitted infection, like syphilis

#### How to order the kit and claim?



- Your self-testing kit will be sent to the address given in contact details and will be dispatched via courier within three working days
- You will receive a self-test kit and detailed instructions on how to perform the HIV test. Please watch the videos on our website when you order your kit, to see how it works
- Kindly take note that your test will be sent in plain and unmarked packaging, so your self-testing process remains confidential

### When will delivery take place?

Delivery will be during office hours (09:00am to 16:00am), Monday to Friday.

### What will it cost me?

There are no out-of-pocket costs. The claim will be covered by the Wellness and Preventative Care Benefit.

### How often should I repeat the test?

We provide one test per qualifying beneficiary, per quarter.



### **What does a negative result mean?**

A negative result means that the test has not detected HIV. Should you receive a negative test result and it has been less than three months since you experienced a risk exposure, repeat the test three months after the risk exposure. It is important to remember to practice safe sex and always use condoms.

### **What does a positive result mean?**

Should your test be reactive (positive), you must have a second blood-based test to confirm the result. Kindly visit your Healthcare Professional for a blood test. All initial HIV tests require a further test to confirm the first result.

### **Bankmed HIV self-test referral process**

Below is a guide to assist you in the event that the self-testing kit produces a reactive (positive) screening result.

Bankmed has special benefits available to you should you be HIV positive; they can be accessed by adhering to the following process:

1. Make an appointment with a Bankmed GP Network provider.
2. Your GP will perform a HIV blood test.
3. Your blood sample will be sent to a laboratory for Elisa and CD4 tests.
4. Should this test confirm that you are HIV positive, please register for the HIV Programme by contacting us through one of the channels below:

 **0800 BANKMED (0800 226 5633)**

 **[hiv@bankmed.co.za](mailto:hiv@bankmed.co.za)**

 **011 539 3151**

