About the Test
The counselling and test will take about 60 minutes to complete. It takes about three months for your immune system to respond to infection with HIV. If you have been infected with HIV in the last three months, it may not show up on this test.

Non-reactive result
If the test does not show signs of HIV infection, and you are concerned that you have been infected within the last three months, you should be tested again in another 2 to 3 months.

Reactive result
If the test is reactive, a second follow-up lab test is required to confirm if you have HIV for certain. It is likely that you have been infected with HIV. You will need to take care to avoid infecting others.

Confidentiality
Your name, or code, and all the information you have discussed with the health care provider testing you will be kept confidential and private.

Who will know test results?
The health care professionals who have been counselling and helping you today will be notified of your test result. If your test result is positive, it will be recorded within the public health system.

If someone has accompanied you to the test, you can either have them leave the room when you are given the results, or you will need to give permission to have that person hear your result.

You may choose to have someone with you when you hear your result.
HIV Point of Care (POC) tests are rapid screening tests that may be an option for you. Initial results are provided in a short period of time. The test can tell you if you are infected with HIV.

Who can benefit from an HIV POC Tests?

- Pregnant women near term or in labour who have not had a previous HIV test, or have not had a recent test and are at risk for HIV.
- People who have been exposed to the blood or body fluids of another person who is at risk for HIV or whose HIV status is unknown.
- Individuals who are very ill with certain infections who would be treated with different medications if they are HIV positive.
- Individuals who are at high risk for HIV who are accessing care at participating community clinics.

What are the advantages of a Point of Care Test?

A point of care test is a rapid screening test that shortens the time it takes for individuals to receive their test results. Standard testing can take up to two weeks before patients receive their test results. This time delay means that patients may suffer anxiety for weeks before receiving their results and other patients may never return to the clinic to discuss the results of their HIV test.

What are the disadvantages of a Point of Care Test?

- All test results are considered preliminary. Further testing is required to confirm all test results (reactive or nonreactive). This is done at the same time as the HIV POC test.
- For some, a nonreactive test result may not necessarily mean that a person is HIV negative. There is a window period of three months between when a person is infected with HIV and when the virus becomes detectable in their system – follow up testing after the window period is required.
- There is also a chance that the person received a false negative test result. Anyone at risk for HIV, including those who believe they may have been exposed to HIV, should have follow-up testing done at three and six months after the first test.

What can you expect before testing?

Prior to being tested for HIV, all patients will be counselled about:

- How HIV is spread and how to protect yourself, others, and the community.
- What your options are for testing – standard, or Point of Care testing – and which one is best for you.
- If an HIV POC test is chosen, you will be given information about the testing process and the accuracy of the test. A sample of blood will also be sent to the lab for confirmatory testing for all preliminary results from a HIV POC test.

You will be asked:

- about your readiness to have the test
- to consent to do the test
- if you want to decline the test
- to provide a blood sample for both the HIV POC test and the standard confirmatory test.

Following the HIV POC test, you will be informed of the result, and what it means. At anytime during the counselling and testing process you may ask questions. The person testing you can also tell you about supports available to you to make sure any concerns are looked after.

All tests are voluntary.