

FACTS ABOUT HIV INDETERMINATE

1. What is HIV?	Human Immunodeficiency Virus infects human white blood cells and causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).
2. What is HIV Antibody Testing?	<p>It is a blood test that looks for the HIV antibody. Antibodies are proteins produced by the body to help fight against substances that the body believes are foreign invaders; for example, the body makes antibodies to fight infection by bacteria or viruses.</p> <p>When you undergo an HIV test, the initial screening test performed on your blood sample is called an ELISA test. If the ELISA were to be positive, it would suggest the possibility of an HIV infection. That same blood sample is then tested two more times and, if the second and/or third ELISA were positive, additional HIV antibody testing would occur.</p> <p>The next more specific confirmatory HIV antibody test is typically a test called the Western Blot (WB). The WB detects antibodies that react specifically to various components or parts of the HIV virus. If the WB were negative, a person is presumed to not have HIV infection. If the WB is positive, a person is assumed to have HIV infection and may be able to infect others with HIV.</p> <p>People with HIV have damaged immune systems, so their health will deteriorate. All new recruits get shots to protect them from disease and they may develop the disease they are being vaccinated for. They cannot donate blood and all military members are potential battlefield blood donors.</p>
3. What is an HIV Indeterminate Test Result?	A Western Blot test for HIV can be positive, negative, or indeterminate. Rarely, the WB can false positive (i.e., it could indicate HIV antibodies are present and be wrong) or a false negative (i.e., it could indicate no HIV antibodies are present and be wrong). Sometimes, the WB is neither positive nor negative. This is called an HIV indeterminate test result. The significance, or meaning, of an HIV indeterminate result is often UNCLEAR.
4. What Causes an HIV Indeterminate Test Result?	<p>Remember that the ELISA and WB test for antibodies to HIV. It could be that a person has been recently exposed to HIV, and the body has not had enough time to make enough of the HIV antibodies in order to turn the test positive. This person may be undergoing seroconversion during this “window period,” and over time, the HIV test should turn antibody positive.</p> <p>IMPORTANT: Not all people who have an HIV indeterminate result are in a “window period.” Many people with HIV indeterminate results have never been exposed to or infected with HIV.</p> <p>There are many reasons for an indeterminate HIV antibody test; basically, if there has been no HIV infection, the test is identifying some other non-HIV antibodies. The reasons why some people have these cross-reacting, non-HIV antibodies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior blood transfusions (with non-HIV infected blood). • History of vaccination (e.g., hepatitis B, influenza (“flu”), rabies vaccines may cause). • Autoimmune disorders (e.g., lupus, Grave’s disease, diabetes). • Prior or current infection with syphilis. • Second or subsequent pregnancies for women. • History of malaria (or dengue fever). • History of other viral infections (other than HIV). • Association with “large animals” (animal trainers and veterinarians are sometimes exposed to viruses which do not cause human disease, but may interfere with HIV antibody tests). • Many other medical conditions, some serious and some not serious. • Sometimes the cause is not known.

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5. Consider Your Risk for HIV Infection	<p>You will know best your risk. In general, persons at risk for HIV infection include those who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Shared needles or syringes to inject drugs.- If male, had sex with another male even one time since 1977.- Had sex with someone known or suspected to be infected with HIV.- Had sex in exchange for money or drugs since 1977.- Received a blood transfusion or blood product medicine (especially prior to 1985).- Lived in, traveled to, or received medical care in countries with high HIV rates.- Had sex with someone who would answer "yes" to any of the above statements.
6. Discuss This Test Result With Your Doctor	<p>Even if you are at low risk for HIV infection and have no symptoms, and even if you have no known history of any of the other medical conditions listed above as alternate causes of an HIV indeterminate test result, it is important that you make an appointment to discuss this test result with your private medical doctor as soon as possible. Your doctor can review your medical history in detail with you and decide if you need additional tests performed. Your doctor can also decide if you need to see a physician who has more experience with patients with HIV indeterminate results, typically an internal medicine or pediatric doctor with a specialty in infectious disease.</p>
7. Until You See Your Doctor.	<p>Until you can contact your doctor or health care provider of your choice for further health evaluation, it is best to be smart and cautious. Although it is highly unlikely that individuals with indeterminate test results and low HIV risk are actually infected with HIV, it is best to exercise maximum precautions to prevent unknowingly spreading the virus to others. It is recommended that you should not donate or attempt to donate blood, plasma, bone marrow, organs, or other body tissues. Household articles, such as razors and toothbrushes that could be contaminated with blood, should not be shared. You should abstain from sexual intercourse or other sexual activity where bodily fluids are exchanged. If you do have sex, use a condom correctly, so as to lower the chance of infecting your partner. Ask your doctor about having your sexual partner(s) tested. NEVER share needles, syringes. If you are a woman who is pregnant or contemplating pregnancy, discuss the test results with your doctor as soon as possible.</p>
8. How Does This Test Result Affect My Processing for Military Service.	<p>Your file has been placed in a temporary medical hold status. This means that no further processing at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) is authorized at this time. If you return to the MEPS and provide another blood specimen, the follow-on HIV test may reveal that you are HIV negative, HIV positive, or HIV indeterminate. The results will be shared with you, and your medical qualification processing will continue according to policy.</p>
9. DOs and DON'Ts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- DO ask questions until any concerns you may have are fully addressed.- DO follow up with your doctor; find a local doctor if you do not already have one.- DO be cautious and protect yourself and others until you see your doctor for advice.- DO send copies of your doctor's evaluation and any test results to the MEPS Chief Medical Officer for review and inclusion in your MEPS medical file.- DO report back to the MEPS for another blood draw for follow on HIV testing.- DO NOT make any rash conclusions about your health or HIV status.- DO NOT leave the office today thinking you have been told that you have AIDS.- DO NOT delay seeing your doctor for a full evaluation.
10. Contact	<p>You have been provided the name and telephone number of the MEPS Commander. If you have additional questions, you may call to speak with the Commander and/or the MEPS Chief Medical Officer. The MEPS personnel will be able to speak in general terms about HIV testing. Your best resource for personal health advice and a complete evaluation is your private doctor or clinic.</p>

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on Indeterminate HIV Antibody Test Results. It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. You are strongly advised to check with your doctor about any specific questions or concerns that you may have. Every effort has been taken to insure that the information in this fact sheet is correct at the time of printing, May 2005.

For more information: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/hivinfo.htm> or <http://www.hivtest.org/subindex.cfm?FuseAction=Locate>