



## How do you know if you have HIV?

### Testing for HIV is the only way to know for sure if you have it.

Feeling sick or having had unprotected sex with someone living with HIV are both good reasons to go for a test, but neither is a way of knowing your status for sure. Not everyone will get symptoms, and if you wait around for them you might damage your immune system.



16+

### Consent to Test

In Zimbabwe, if you are 16 years or above, you can have a test for HIV without a caregiver. If you are below 16 years (a minor), you will need a caregiver to consent to the test first. BUT, if the health care worker thinks it is in the best interest of the child, a minor may be tested without the caregiver's consent before the age of 16.

### Who Is At Risk?

- ▶ A child whose mother or father died from HIV
- ▶ A child who is sick
- ▶ A child that has been hospitalised
- ▶ A child or adolescent that has been sexually abused
- ▶ An child or adolescent that has had sex
- ▶ An adolescent who is pregnant or breastfeeding
- ▶ An adolescent who has an HIV positive partner or a partner with unknown status

## HIV Testing

The **window period** refers to the space of time from the point of infection until the time when you can take the test and trust that you get an accurate result.

This will vary depending on the type of test that you take. Some tests can only give an accurate result if it has been three months since you acquired HIV, but other newer types can give you a result just weeks after. Your healthcare provider will tell you what the window period is for the test you take.

But it is not recommended that you wait for the window period to end before getting tested. If you think you might have been at risk get tested right away. You can always go back and test again later, once the window period has ended.



### Did You Know

It is very important that you keep your HIV test results up to date. This means getting tested regularly, especially if you have had unprotected sex. The general recommendation is to test yourself at least once yearly, but it may be more often than that depending on what risks are present.



### Did You Know

If you are 16 years and above, it is now possible to screen yourself for HIV at a place of your convenience. Using an oral test, you can screen yourself for HIV in the comfort of your own home. If the test result is positive, it is extremely important that you go to the clinic for a second test which will confirm if the test is positive or not. Ask your health care provider or CATS if you would like to find out more.

An **index case** is the first person known to be living with a particular condition and **helps us to find other people at risk of the same condition**. A child, adolescent or young person living with HIV is known to be HIV positive. Their siblings, sexual partners may therefore also be at risk of HIV and should be tested. A caregiver living with HIV is also an index case and the children need to get tested.

