

Most Americans have never had an HIV test: CDC

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(HealthDay)—Fewer than 4 in 10 Americans have ever heeded federal

government recommendations to be tested for HIV, health officials reported Thursday.

"Getting tested for HIV is quicker and easier than ever before—and when you take the test, you take control," said Dr. Eugene McCray, director of the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The agency encourages everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 to get an HIV test at least once as part of their routine health care.

Instead, the latest CDC survey found that:

- Less than 40% of Americans have ever had an HIV test.
- Less than 30% of those most at risk for HIV were tested in the last year.
- In 50 places where more than 50% of HIV diagnoses occur, less than 35% of those who should be tested annually were tested in the past year.
- Only 26% of those in [rural areas](#) where annual HIV testing is recommended were tested in the past year.

Those who should get an HIV test each year include:

- Sexually active gay and bisexual men
- Drug abusers
- People with multiple sex partners since their last test
- People who have other sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis or tuberculosis.

"Diagnosis and treatment are the first steps toward affording individuals living with HIV a normal life expectancy," CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield said in an agency news release.

"As we encourage those at risk for HIV to seek care, we need to meet them in their journey. This means clearing the path of stigma, finding more comfortable ways of delivering [health services](#), as well as learning from individuals already in treatment so the journey becomes easier for others who follow," he added.

Regardless of whether the test is positive or negative, it will help you take control of your [health](#), the CDC said.

People whose test is negative can help prevent getting HIV by taking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), in a single daily pill.

A positive [test](#) can lead to treatment that can reduce the amount of the virus in your body, extending your life and lowering the risk of passing HIV to others, the CDC said.

The report was published June 28 in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

More information: Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for more on [HIV testing](#).

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