

## HIV Questions & Answers

### 1. **Am I at risk for HIV?**

If you have ever had unprotected sexual intercourse with a partner of unknown HIV status or have ever shared needles with someone of unknown HIV status, then you may be at risk for HIV infection. This can include sharing needles for steroid use, ear or body piercing and tattooing. An infected mother can infect her unborn baby since HIV can pass through the placenta into the infant's bloodstream or while the infant is breastfeeding. Also, if you have received blood or blood products before 1985, you could be at risk.

### 2. **Where can I get tested for HIV?**

The Barton County Health Department offers counseling and appropriate HIV testing. You can also get tested at a private doctor's office.

### 3. **Do I need an appointment?**

HIV testing is available on a walk in basis.

### 4. **What services are available for someone HIV+ in the community?**

HIV case managers are available to Barton County residents to assess the physical, financial and emotional needs of clients and then assist them in developing a plan of health care. Case managers help clients access and utilize local resources such as:

Physicians, Public Aid, support groups, assistance with partner notification, transportation, housing, substance abuse treatment and legal services. Other services may be available as well.

### 5. **Where can I tested for STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases)?**

The Barton County Health Department offers STD testing during regular office hours.

The clinic is done on a walk in basis - no appointment is needed. There is a \$50.00 fee for the complete clinic. Spanish speaking interpreters are available.

### 6. **What types of Community Education Programs are available?**

A staff of trained AIDS prevention educators is available, upon request, to give presentations to civic groups, clubs, schools, work sites and religious organizations. These presentations consist of up-to-date information about AIDS including:

- What HIV and AIDS are and why the infection is a serious problem
- How the virus can and cannot be spread
- How one can avoid and prevent exposure to the virus
- A variety of other AIDS related issues

7. **What support groups are available?**

Please call (620) 793-1902 for current support group information.

8. **Can you give me some information about the HIV antibody test?**

HIV testing is confidential and available to anyone with identified risk behaviors. You speak to a counselor, who assesses your risk and answers your questions about HIV, blood is drawn and then arrangements are made for you to return and view your test results. You have to come in for the results; we will not release the results over the phone or in the mail.

9. **What is the cost of the services?**

The HIV antibody test at the Barton County Health Department is \$20, but is on a sliding fee according to a person's ability to pay, if a person meets the KDHE risk factors criteria. If a person does not meet that criteria, then the cost currently is \$42 for private lab testing and it is not on a sliding fee scale.

10. **How can I protect myself from getting infected with HIV?**

Since a vast majority of the people living with HIV were infected through sex or through sharing needles, the best way to protect yourself is to **abstain from using drugs and sharing needles, and to either abstain from sexual intercourse, or develop a mutually monogamous relationship with a tested, uninfected partner. Condoms**, when used correctly, are very **effective in reducing the risk of transmitting HIV as well as other sexually transmitted diseases**. For a more specific prevention plan, call (620) 793-1902 and speak to one of our nurses.