



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Take the Test - Take Control

Vermont Department of Health Recognizes National HIV Testing Day 2011

For Immediate Release: June 24, 2011
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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health will work to inform all Vermonters on June 27, National HIV Testing Day, of the importance of both early diagnosis through testing, and early access to treatment for people with the virus.

Vermonters are encouraged to ask their doctor for a confidential test.

There are also 35 sites in 11 counties where free anonymous and confidential HIV tests are offered in collaboration with the Health Department. Testing is also available directly through Health Department district offices in Newport, St. Albans, and Burlington.

Thirty years after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced the first AIDS cases, the epidemic is still growing.

According to the CDC, more than one million people in the United States are living with HIV/AIDS and – of these – one out of five people do not know they are infected. In 2010, 238 Vermonters were known to be living with AIDS and 161 with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS). An estimated 100 people in Vermont are living with the virus but are unaware that they have it.

HIV is spread primarily through unprotected sex and syringe-sharing. A mother with HIV can pass the virus to her baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding, although early intervention and medical care can greatly reduce this risk.

“Although there is no cure for HIV infection, for people living with the virus, testing is a critical first step in taking control of their health,” said Patsy Kelso, state epidemiologist for infectious disease at the Health Department.

Medical treatment has improved dramatically in recent years. People who are diagnosed with HIV and access health care early after their infection can experience long and productive lives. Studies show that when people find out they are living with HIV, they take steps to protect their own health and that of their partners.

“Medical providers are trained to deliver confidential services to their patients,” Kelso said. “Anonymous testing is another option designed for people at increased risk who want to know their HIV status.”

In recognition of National HIV Testing Day, the Health Department in Burlington will offer expanded testing hours Monday through Friday, June 27-July 1, by appointment. On Monday through Wednesday and on Friday appointments are available from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. on the hour. On Thursday this week, there are testing slots available from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.. There are a total of 16 testing slots available by appointment.

The Health Department provides OraSure™ testing, where a sample of oral fluid is collected and sent to the Health Department laboratory for analysis. Test results are ready within two weeks. OraQuick™, a 20-minute screening tool for HIV, will be another option available at this special week-long clinic. To make an appointment for testing or for more information about HIV, call 863-7245 in Burlington or call in-state toll-free 1-800-882-2437 or 1-800-882-AIDS

For more information on HIV and AIDS you can also visit www.healthvermont.gov or www.getttestedvermont.com.

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