



## **Subject Information Brochure - What You Should Know About HIV and the Reveal® G4 Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test (Reveal G4) Before Getting Tested**

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**It is very important to read this brochure before you get tested for HIV. It will provide you with the following information:**

- **What should you know before you get tested for HIV.**
  - **What should you know about HIV and AIDS.**
  - **How can you become infected with HIV.**
  - **How can you avoid becoming infected with HIV.**
  - **Why should you get an HIV test.**
  - **What you should know about rapid HIV tests.**
  - **What you should know about your options for HIV testing.**
  - **What you should know about the Reveal G4 Rapid HIV-1 Antibody Test and how it is performed.**
  - **What you should know about your test results.**
  - **Where you can get more information about HIV and AIDS.**
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### **What you should know before you get tested for HIV.**

Read this brochure carefully. If you have any further questions, or do not understand something, make sure that you ask your healthcare provider to explain it to you. Once you understand, you can make good choices about getting tested for HIV infection.

Your healthcare provider is the best person to answer your questions about HIV, Reveal G4, and other testing options that are available to you. You have a choice of the type of test to use. Depending on what type of HIV test you choose, a sample of your blood, fluid from your mouth, or urine will be taken and checked for HIV antibodies. If HIV antibodies are found in your body that means that you have been infected with HIV, which is the virus that causes AIDS.

### **What you should know about HIV and AIDS**

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV causes AIDS (Acquired

Immunodeficiency Syndrome). Many people are infected with HIV and do not have any sign of illness for many months or years. When a person becomes infected with HIV, it begins to attack his or her immune system, which is the body's defence against illness. As a result, that person becomes ill more and more often. When his or her body loses the ability to fight diseases, that person is said to have AIDS. People with AIDS become very sick with serious illnesses and cancers, and often will die from these illnesses.

### **How you can become infected with HIV.**

HIV is passed on to another person through contact with blood, semen, vaginal fluids or breast milk of an infected person. This contact includes unsafe sex. Contact also includes exposure to blood through the sharing of used syringes or needles. Blood transfusions are another way of becoming HIV-infected, although this is now very rare. An HIV-infected mother can pass on the disease during the birthing process or through breastfeeding.

People cannot become infected with HIV by casual contact. Everyday things such as clothes, dishes, food, phones or toilet seats used by an HIV-infected person cannot pass on HIV to another person. Saliva, tears or sweat from an infected person cannot pass on HIV. Mosquitoes, or any other insect bites, have not been reported as a way to pass on HIV.

### **How you can avoid becoming infected with HIV.**

Certain activities make you more likely to get HIV passed on to you. You will lower your risk of becoming infected with HIV by following these suggestions:

- Do not share needles or syringes.
- Do not have sex with anyone that is infected with HIV.
- Use a latex condom every time you have sex with a person whose HIV status is unknown.

### **Why you should get an HIV test.**

You may have been infected with HIV and not know it. It may take years before someone infected with HIV develops AIDS. There are no visible signs to tell you if you have been infected with HIV. The only way to be confident that you are not infected with HIV is to get an HIV test. If you learn that you are infected with HIV, you can take the steps to avoid activities that will pass it on to others. It is important to find out if you are infected with HIV so that you can receive good medical care. Although there is presently no cure for AIDS, there are new treatments and

medications for HIV infection that can help you live a longer and healthier life. As with other diseases, finding out if you are infected with HIV early offers more options for treatment and preventive care.

#### **What you should know about rapid HIV tests.**

A rapid test for detecting antibodies to HIV is a test that provides very fast results, in 30 minutes or less. In comparison, results from the commonly used HIV antibody screening test called the Enzyme Immunoassay (EIA) are usually not available for 1-2 weeks. All screening tests (including both the EIA and the rapid HIV test) must have a confirmation of the Reactive HIV test result before a final diagnosis of infection with HIV can be given.

#### **What you should know about your options for HIV testing.**

Reveal G4 can give you a rapid HIV test result in less than three minutes in a situation where test results are needed right away. For example, in a hospital emergency room you would need fast HIV test results. There are other HIV tests available if test results are not needed right away. These tests may use a sample of your blood, fluid from your mouth or a urine sample, but the result may not be available for a few days, or up to several weeks.

#### **What you should know about Reveal G4 and how it is performed.**

Reveal G4 is a fast and accurate test that provides an easy-to-read test result in less than three minutes. Reveal G4 is used to look for antibodies in a sample of your blood. Once you decide to have the Reveal G4 test, your healthcare provider will take a tube of blood from your vein or a fingerstick sample, perform the test while you wait and give you the test results within the same visit.

For more details, you can ask your healthcare provider to give you complete information about Reveal G4.

#### **What you should know about your test results after taking the Reveal G4 Test.**

A **Negative** test result on Reveal G4 means that HIV antibodies were not detected in your blood at the time of testing. However, this does not completely rule out the possibility of infection with HIV. If, in the last 3 months, you have had any of the contacts described in the “**How you can become infected with HIV**” section above, there is a possibility that you may still be infected with HIV. HIV antibodies may not appear until a few months after infection with HIV. A recent infection may not produce enough antibodies to be detected by this test. Ask your healthcare

provider if you should consider getting tested again in the next 3 to 6 months to be sure that you are not infected. However, if you are certain that you have not had any of these contacts that could pass on HIV to you in the 3 months before you have this HIV test, a **Negative** test result means that you were not infected with HIV at the time of the test. You should always ask your healthcare provider if you are not sure about what your test result means.

A **Reactive** test result on Reveal G4 means that your blood may contain HIV antibodies. This result, however, must be confirmed by another test. Until your HIV test is confirmed, you should be careful not to be involved in any activities that might spread HIV.

If your test result is confirmed positive (HIV-infected), many things can be done to help you look after your health. Many people who test positive for HIV infection stay healthy for many years. Even if you become ill, there are medications that can help to slow down the virus and maintain your immune system. You should let your own doctor know that you are HIV-positive so that he or she can watch your health closely. You must take steps to protect others by practicing safe sex and by informing your past and present partners about your HIV test result.

#### **Where you can get more information about HIV and AIDS**

If you have any questions or want additional information, ask your healthcare provider or contact your local health department.

You can call the **CDC National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)** where you can talk directly to an HIV specialist. These HIV specialists are available all day and all night to answer your questions at any time. Other AIDS service organizations near you can also provide information, education, and the help you may need.



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