

Taking the HIV test : when? / Camden & Islington Gay Men's Team ; illustration by Mark Blann.

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TAKING THE HIV TEST

WHEN?

It can take your body up to **THREE MONTHS** after **INFECTION WITH HIV** before it produces enough antibodies to the virus to be detected by the test. This three-month gap is commonly known as **THE WINDOW PERIOD**.

HIV enters the bloodstream.

Antibodies to HIV start appearing in the blood a few weeks after the initial infection...

... but it is not until three months after infection that there are enough antibodies in the blood to be detected by the HIV test. If you take the test before this point, you risk getting a false negative result.

CAMDEN &
ISLINGTON
gay
MEN'S TEAM

part of


LONDON GAY MEN'S
HEALTH FOUNDATION


Camden **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

ALL ABOUT HIV⁺

Some people start producing ANTIBODIES sooner, but it is usually not until three months that there are sufficient ANTIBODIES to be detected by the HIV TEST. The test commonly used in most clinics cannot detect very small quantities of ANTIBODIES in the blood. So, if you think that you may have put yourself at risk of getting HIV in the last three months, then you may want to wait before you take the test. If you take the test too soon, you may get a misleading negative result. Your sexual health clinic will advise you on the best time to take the test.



Buy condoms and lube at great prices online at...  freedom's-shop.com

www.metromate.org.uk  MetroM8

This is one of a series of six postcards adapted from an exhibition entitled ALL ABOUT HIV⁺, which was produced by Camden & Islington Gay Men's Team. For more details phone 020 7530 3911

Illustration: by Mark Blann