Keep a close watch on your health between check-ups. Take your meds exactly the way they have been prescribed; if you don't, you could be risking your health.

Eat healthy foods, get enough rest and talk to other HIV positive people to find out what they do to stay healthy. There is a lot to learn and your health care providers, local community-based organizations and support organizations can help you find out what you need to know.

Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and using drugs all can weaken your body's defense system against disease.

Exercise can help keep you strong and help relieve stress.

Share your feelings with friends and loved ones when you are ready to do so. If you can't do that, find a support group where you can share your feelings. It helps reduce anxiety and stress in your life..

So Remember:

Living with HIV is more than just medical treatment alone. It means learning to take care of your overall health.

- Choose safe ways to be with a lover, so you do not pass HIV to others.
- See a healthcare provider or visit a clinic and have regular check ups.
- If your provider gives you medicine, take it regularly.
- Take charge of your own health. Learn to eat a healthy diet, manage your stress and exercise regularly to feel your best!
- When you feel ready to do so, join a support group or talk to your friends or family. Get the support you need.

Early Intervention Programs (EIP)

Billings RiverStone Health	**247-3324**
Bozeman Gallatin City-County Health Dept.	**582-3100**
Butte Family Services Center	**497-5016**
Great Falls Cascade City-County Health Dept.	**454-6950**
Havre Hill County Health Dept.	**265-5481** **ext 66**
Helena Lewis & Clark Health Dept.	**443-2584**
Kalispell Flathead City-County Health Dept.	**751-8150**
Missoula Partnership Health Center	**258-4186**

Or Call:
Montana STD/HIV Section: 444-3565
National AIDS Hotline:
1-800-232-4636

For additional copies, call 444-3565

MONTANA
Department of Public Health & Human Services

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MONTANA

HIV
POSITIVE
ANTIBODY TEST

Department of Public Health and Human Services

About Your Positive HIV Antibody Test

What Does It Mean?

Testing positive for HIV means that your blood has signs of the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV). It **does not** mean that you have AIDS.

A doctor needs to examine you and perform tests that will help him check your health status. Your post-test counselor can explain the test accuracy and answer any questions you may have.

Finding out you have HIV is scary. There are many support groups made up of other people in Montana who have tested positive. Call the Montana STD/HIV Section at **406-444-3565** to find out where to find a group.

Confidentiality (privacy)

The professionals who perform and record your test understand the need to keep your results confidential. Discuss any concerns you may have about privacy with your post-test counselor.

Early Intervention Program

Enrollment in an Early Intervention Program (EIP) can help you learn more about your infection. Drug therapies can be prescribed by your doctor in the early stages of the infection that will help to control the virus in your body. Changing risky behaviors may slow disease progression and prevent the spread of HIV.

The EIP can help you put this disease into perspective. EIP can provide you with a variety of services, including education, a medical evaluation and emotional support. This is all done in a confidential setting.

EIP site numbers are on the back of this brochure.

How Is HIV Spread?

HIV is **not** spread by casual contact, but by certain activities. These high risk behaviors include passing semen, blood and/or vaginal secretions from an infected person to someone else. These fluids are usually passed through unprotected sexual contact or through the sharing of injectable drugs and syringes. Open sores, cuts or other skin injuries make it easier for HIV to enter into the body. Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) such as herpes, syphilis and genital warts can cause sores that can help HIV infect others, or can help someone get infected if their sores come into contact with HIV infected bodily fluids. Many STDs are treatable. See your healthcare provider or nearest health department.

Even though you are already HIV positive, you are at risk of becoming re-infected if you participate in high risk behaviors. You could be re-infected with a different strain of HIV which could be stronger than your original infection and could complicate your health care.

Protect Yourself & Others

Protect yourself if you have sex:

- Use a new condom each time you have oral, anal or vaginal sex. Latex or polyurethane condoms are best because HIV can pass through lambskin or natural condoms.
- Use water-based lubricants, **NOT** oils or lotions, that can cause a condom to break.

Protect yourself if you use drugs:

- Never share drug needles or “works”
- Clean drug needles with bleach, let them sit for 30 seconds; repeat 3 times, then rinse with clean water 3 times. Do this between each use. Use new cotton, water and other materials each time.
- Mixing sex, drugs and alcohol is risky. If you are drunk or high, it is harder to make good decisions about having safer sex.

Protect your baby if you are pregnant:

- You can pass HIV on to your baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.
- Certain medicines can lower your risk of passing HIV to your baby during pregnancy. Ask your healthcare provider.

The only sure way to avoid passing HIV on to someone else is not to have sex or share needles or "works". This includes tattoo or piercing needles. Ask your post-test counselor about drug treatment programs if you are ready to seek treatment.

Please do not donate blood, plasma, sperm, body organs or tissues. If you are a donor on your driver’s license, have it deleted.

Partner Notification

Since your test is positive, any sex or needle-sharing partners you may have had need to be notified and given the opportunity to receive counseling and testing. By law, public health personnel cannot tell your partner(s) your identity or the time or place of possible infection.

This is a very sensitive task. You don’t have to do this alone. Public health staff can either tell your partner(s) or help you tell them. We are here to help.

Take Charge of Your Health

Taking good care of yourself is important! Visit a doctor or clinic right away for a check up. You will need to see a healthcare professional regularly to check how well your body is fighting HIV.

There are many new treatments available to help HIV-positive persons live healthier and longer. Ask you healthcare provider for more information regarding treatments.