



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

Dickinson County

818 Pyle Drive, Kingsford, MI 49802
Ph: (906) 774-1868 Fax: (906) 774-9910
BRANCH OFFICE

www.didhd.org

Iron County

601 Washington Avenue, Iron River, MI 49935
Ph: (906) 265-9913 Fax: (906) 265-2950
MAIN OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:

Barbara Peterson – 906-265-4187

Get Tested for Free on National HIV Testing Day

Kingsford, Michigan, May 4, 2015 - June 27, 2015 marks the 20th annual National HIV Testing Day, a time to promote one of our best tools for HIV prevention. Too many people—one in six—who are living with HIV are not aware of it. That means they are not getting the treatment they need to stay healthy and may pass the virus on to others without knowing it.

HIV can be spread when someone with HIV has sex or shares injection drug equipment with someone who does not have HIV. If the partner with HIV is on medicine to treat HIV (antiretroviral therapy, or ART), or the partner who is HIV-negative is on medicine to prevent HIV infection, the risk can be much lower.

CDC recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care and that some people with risk factors get tested more often. Gay and bisexual men, people with more than one sex partner, people with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and people who inject drugs are at high risk and should get tested at least once a year.

You should also be tested if you have been sexually assaulted or if you are a woman who is pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

When you know your HIV status, you can take care of yourself and your partner(s). If you find out that you are infected with HIV (if you test positive), you can seek medical care and get treatment. Besides allowing you to live a longer, healthier life, being on ART can protect the health of your partners because it can greatly reduce the risk that you can pass HIV to others.

If you don't have HIV (if you test negative), you can take steps to stay negative, such as using condoms consistently. Remember that if you have risky sex or share needles for drug use after you've tested negative for HIV, you need to get tested again to make sure you are still HIV-negative. Your HIV test result "expires" every time you have risky sex or share needles or related works.

Getting tested for HIV is easier than ever. You can ask your doctor for a test, call 1-800-CDC-INFO, or text your ZIP code to "KNOW IT" (566948). Health insurance usually covers the test, and some sites offer free testing.

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Locally, the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department offers HIV testing and counseling services. In observance of National HIV Testing Day, the Health Department will offer free HIV testing in each of its offices on Monday, June 8th at the Iron County office and on Monday, June 15th at the Dickinson County office. Testing is anonymous and confidential. Orasure testing is available which is non-invasive and involves no blood drawing. Those wishing to be tested may call the Health Department at 774-1868 or 265-4166 to make an appointment. For additional information on HIV testing please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HIVtesting/>.

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