



UNDERSTANDING THE HIV TESTING ALGORITHM

The Wisconsin HIV Program is not a medical provider and does not provide medical advice. The following testing recommendations are from current Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. More information can be found at: stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/23447

1 THE SCREENING TEST

- Most modern methods test for antigen (Ag) and antibody (Ab)
- Some outdated methods only test for antibodies and may be listed as an enzyme immunoassay (EIA)

If a screening test is reactive, more testing must be done to know someone's HIV status.

2 SUPPLEMENTARY TESTING

- Modern methods **differentiate** between HIV-1 and HIV-2 antibodies (answers the question, "Are any HIV antibodies present? If yes, what kind of antibodies?").
- The Western Blot is an outdated supplementary test that is not recommended for use by CDC.

If a supplementary test is positive for either kind of antibody after a reactive screening test, then the person is HIV positive.

If a supplementary test is negative or indeterminate, more testing must be done to know someone's HIV status.

3 THE NUCLEIC ACID TEST

- Might appear under several names: HIV-1 proviral DNA PCR, HIV-1 RNA qualitative, HIV-1 RNA PCR, or an HIV-1 NAT
- If negative, rule out acute infection in people with a reactive screen but a negative or indeterminate supplementary test

If a NAT is positive after a reactive screen and a negative or indeterminate supplementary test, then the person is diagnosed with acute HIV.

If a NAT is negative, then the person is HIV negative.



If a client is confirmed to be HIV positive, report the positive results to the Wisconsin HIV Program within 72 hours. [Wisconsin HIV case report forms](#) (fillable Word and PDF) are available online.

To submit the completed case report form by one of the following:

- Submit electronically via Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System ([WEDSS](#))
- Fax to 608-720-3548
- Call 608-267-5287

QUESTIONS? Contact the Wisconsin HIV Program's Surveillance Unit.
Call: 608-267-5287 Email: DHSHIVSurveillance@dhs.wisconsin.gov

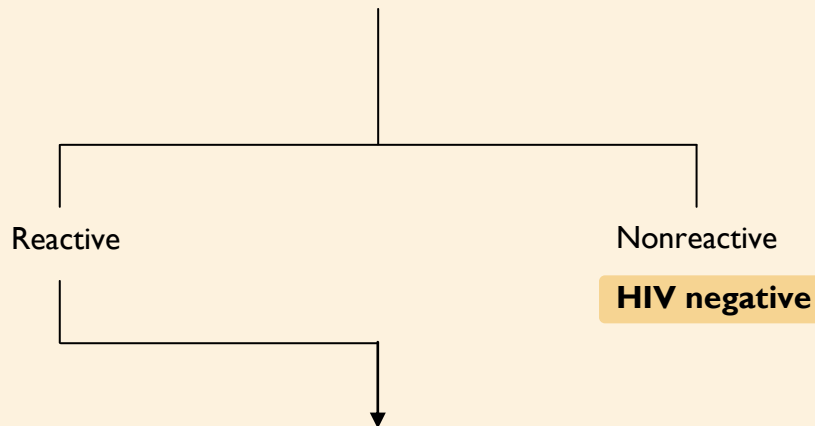




HIV TESTING ALGORITHM DIAGRAM

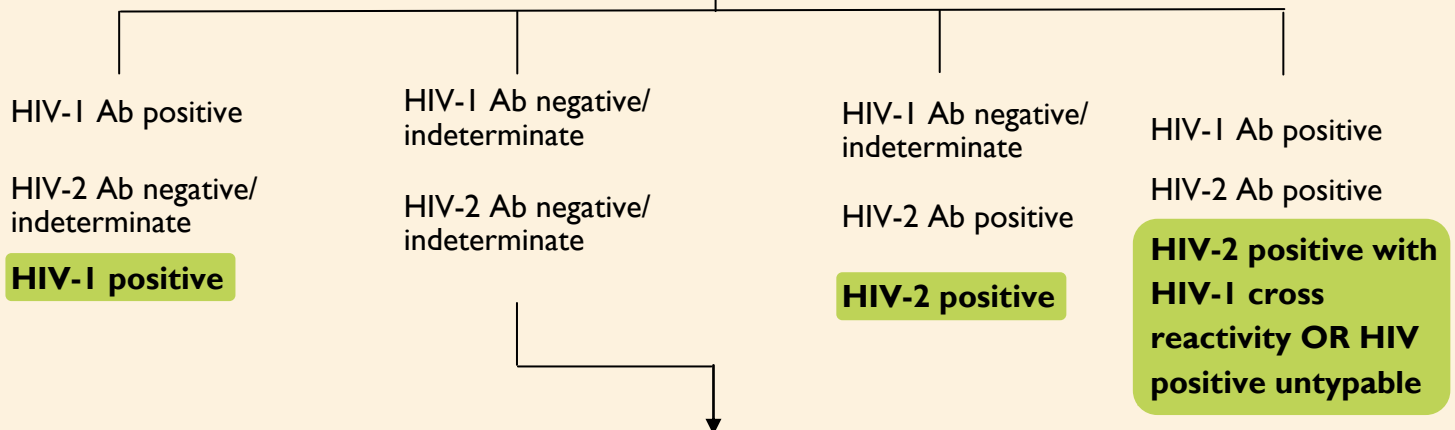
STEP 1

Screening test (HIV 1-2 Ag/Ab)



STEP 2

Supplementary test (HIV 1/2 Ab Differentiation)



STEP 3*

HIV-1 RNA/DNA NAT (nucleic acid test by PCR)

*This test is not always
reflexed by laboratory;
additional blood draw
and physician order may
be required

