

What is an HIV baseline evaluation? - Newly diagnosed with HIV, part 2

After you test positive for HIV, an HIV baseline evaluation is done. This evaluation includes all the information collected during your first visits with a health care provider. It includes a review of your health and medical history, a physical exam, and lab tests.



The purpose of an HIV baseline evaluation is to:

- Determine how far your HIV infection has progressed.
- Evaluate your readiness to start lifelong treatment with HIV medicines.
- Collect information to decide what medicines to start.

During an HIV baseline evaluation, the health care provider explains the benefits and risks of HIV treatment and discusses ways to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others.

What lab tests are included in an HIV baseline evaluation?

CD4 count

CD4 cells are one of the infection-fighting cells of the immune system. The higher your CD4 count is, the better. HIV destroys CD4 cells, which damages the immune system.

Viral load

A viral load test measures how much virus is in the blood. A goal of HIV treatment is to keep your viral load so low that the virus can't be detected.

Drug-resistance testing

Drug-resistance testing identifies which, if any, HIV medicines will not be effective against your strain of HIV.



Testing for STDs, sexually transmitted diseases

Infection with another STD can cause HIV infection to advance faster and increase the risk of HIV transmission to a sexual partner. STD testing makes it possible to detect and treat an STD promptly.



An HIV baseline evaluation also includes other tests, such as blood tests to assess your overall health and to look for other infections.

Be sure to get answers to any questions you have about HIV/AIDS. Your public health department, health care provider, and public library can help.

Text is from HIV/AIDS sources from the Department of Health and Human Services and adapted by HealthReach and Healthy Roads Media. This project has been funded in whole or in part with Federal funds by the National Library of Medicine award number HHSN276201500011I awarded to the Center for Public Service Communications. Images from iStock.com.

Creation Date: March 2017