

# OraQuick<sup>®</sup> In-Home HIV Test Q&A:

## What is the OraQuick In-Home HIV Test?

The OraQuick In-Home HIV Test is a kit that allows you to test and get your results in the privacy of your own home. This test is approved by the Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The test collects cells by taking a swab of your gums. The test looks for antibodies to HIV. These are proteins your body makes in response to having HIV infection. The In-Home test will give you results in 20 minutes. If you are 17 or older you can buy the test kit for about \$40 at a local drug store, or online. The kit comes with one test, written instructions on how to take the test, and information on what the test results mean.

## How accurate is the In-Home test?

The home test kit is not as good as the blood tests used in doctors' offices or HIV testing sites. **How accurate the test is for you will depend on how recently you might have been infected.**

The **Window Period** is the time between infection and when a test can accurately detect that infection.

OraQuick In-Home Test	3 Months
Clinic Based Insti™ Rapid Test	3 Weeks
Clinic Based 4 <sup>th</sup> Gen. Test	2 Weeks

All HIV tests have a “window period.” The window period is the time between when a person gets infected and when a test becomes positive. The In-Home test has a window period of about **3 months**. Clinic-based blood tests can accurately detect HIV much earlier. The new 4<sup>th</sup> generation test can usually detect HIV within 2 weeks. You can get a 4<sup>th</sup> generation test at Harborview STD Clinic, Gay City Wellness Center, or Center for MultiCultural Health.

The In-Home test can also give a negative result if a person has advanced HIV infection.

The In-Home test is likely to miss a quarter to a third of HIV infections among Seattle-area men who have sex with men (MSM). As a result, **MSM who test for HIV regularly should continue to get tested in a clinic where blood tests are used.** The In-Home test may be a good extra test if you want to test more often without the hassle of going to a clinic. Also, **if you don't currently test on a regular basis, the In-Home test is better than no test at all.**

## If the In-Home test isn't as accurate as the tests used in clinical and outreach settings, why did it get approved?

The In-Home test is a way to increase testing and find new positives. It is one of several testing options. For people who have trouble accessing healthcare or clinic based testing, a home test is better than no test at all.

## What if the In-Home test is positive?

If you get a positive test result, go to a clinic and **get a blood test to make sure your In-Home result is correct.** OraQuick also has a 24 hour hotline that provides referrals to local testing sites. If you don't want to go to your private doctor Public Health has a list of other places you can go to get tested: [tinyurl.com/hivtestplaces](http://tinyurl.com/hivtestplaces)

## Is counseling offered with the In-Home test?

The home test kit includes general written information about HIV testing and what test results mean. There is also a 24-hour telephone line run by the manufacturer you can call if you need support or local referrals.

## Can the In-Home test tell me if I have other STDS?

**No.** The In-Home test can only tell if you have HIV. Currently there is no FDA approved in home tests for chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis or any other STD.

## Can I use the In-Home test with partners to help decide whether to use condoms?

**No.** You should not take this test and then decide to have sex without a condom based on the results. This is because the 3 month window period makes it likely that the In-Home test would miss a recent infection. **Recent infections are the most contagious.** The test kits include a warning about “just before sex” testing. It says you should not use the test to make decisions about immediate sexual risk behavior.

## Who shouldn't use the In-Home test?

You should **not** use the In-Home test if:

- You are **under age 17**. The test has not yet evaluated for this age group. The FDA has not approved the test for people younger than 17.
- You have **participated in an HIV vaccine trial**. Trial vaccines may cause you to get a result that is not accurate.
- You are concerned about a **possible exposure to HIV within the last 3 months** (e.g. unprotected sex, sharing needles or injection drug equipment). The In-Home test is not sensitive enough to identify a new infection. Public Health recommends a clinic based 4<sup>th</sup> generation test to detect recent infections. If you cannot get a blood test but you want to test for HIV, you can take the home test now, and then insure you get another test in 3 months.
- You are **experiencing symptoms of a possible recent HIV infection**. These symptoms can include fever, fatigue, sore throat, rash, swollen tonsils or lymph nodes, headache, joint or muscle aches, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, or night sweats. It's important to diagnose HIV infection as soon as possible. Get a 4<sup>th</sup> generation test if you think you

might have symptoms of recent HIV infection. Starting treatment as soon as possible after becoming infected can help protect your immune system and keep you healthy.

## Key messages about the In-Home HIV test

- **The In-Home test is better than no test at all.** It may be helpful for some people as an extra test to do between regular blood tests.
- The In-Home test is **NOT** recommended as a substitute for regular blood testing for HIV infection among men who have sex with men.
- The In-Home test cannot reliably identify infections that occurred in the prior 3 months.
- If you are at risk for HIV and you are willing and able to go to an HIV/STD testing clinic or site, you should do so . . . regularly!
- It's best to get an HIV test in a setting that can also test for other STDs.
- If you get a positive test result, it's important to get a clinic based test to make sure your result is accurate.
- Home Testing is **NOT** a good way to “screen” sex partners in real time. There is a possibility of getting an incorrect result.

## Where can I find more information?

FDA OraQuick Briefing (PDF)  
[tinyurl.com/oraquickbriefing](http://tinyurl.com/oraquickbriefing)

OraQuick In-Home Oral HIV Test Factsheet (PDF)  
[tinyurl.com/inhometestfactsheet](http://tinyurl.com/inhometestfactsheet)

For Local Testing Locations Visit:  
[tinyurl.com/hivtestplaces](http://tinyurl.com/hivtestplaces)

or call the HIV/STD Program at 206-263-2000