



## What we provide

Services that people use at The Eddystone Trust include:

- Advocacy - e.g. help dealing with other services or workers
- Counselling - specific 1-to-1 support
- Treatment information - information and options relating to your HIV treatment
- Welfare Rights support - help claiming benefits
- Individual support - a chance to be safe and to be heard

More information or support can be accessed from:

The Eddystone Trust  
36 Looe Street  
Plymouth  
Devon  
PL4 0EB

Tel: 01752 257077  
Fax: 01752 252093

E-mail: [info@eddystone.org.uk](mailto:info@eddystone.org.uk)  
Website: [www.eddystone.org.uk](http://www.eddystone.org.uk)

Sexual Health Information Line (24 hour): 0800 567 123

**Remember, the only thing  
that has changed  
is your knowledge**

# Post Test Information: HIV



**You tested positive. Your result is a piece of knowledge and knowing about the virus is powerful. Now that you know, you can do something about it.**

### **Time To Adjust**

Many questions and anxieties will probably spring to mind. You may experience strong and mixed emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel to the news that you are HIV positive there is only *your* way! You may want to find out everything you can about HIV, or you may want to push it to the back of your mind and try to forget about it altogether. These reactions are *natural* and *normal*. The most important thing is to give yourself time to adjust.

One of the most unsettling things about being antibody positive is the range of emotions you can experience, even in a single day.

These feelings can affect your health, how you feel about yourself and other people and your attitude towards life. You may find yourself thinking ‘why bother?’ Some people feel there is no hope but there are many thousands of people living with HIV who prove that there is hope. So all the more reason to seek help, advice and support, especially from counsellors, health advisors and doctors, and maybe from other people who, like yourself, are HIV positive.

### **Inform yourself**

Save making any major decisions in your life until you have given yourself **time to adjust**.

**You will have been given a blood test to work out your CD4 count and viral load.**

### **What is a CD4 count?**

CD4 cells or T-Helper cells, are white blood cells which organise the immune system's response to some genes and viruses. HIV can infect CD4 cells and use them to produce more HIV copies. The CD4 count is the measurement of the number of cells in a given amount of blood. The CD4 count of a person who is healthy may lie anywhere between 500-1200.

### **What is the viral load test?**

Viral load tests count the number of HIV particles in a sample of blood. When the virus level is under control the result is less than 50. These levels vary in everyone and combined with CD4 will help you to decide when to start treatment.

## **Before you tell**

You need to remember that change is a difficult process.....

### **Things to think through before telling others**

- Others may find it difficult to accept your health status
- Some people may discriminate against you because of your HIV status
- You may be rejected in social or dating situations

### **You do not have to tell anybody**

Take your time to decided who to tell and how to approach them. Be sure you are ready. Many people want to tell others about their status but they are just not sure who or when to tell. Remember they too need time to adjust.

### **Reasons for telling others**

- You can get love and support to help you deal with your health and feelings
- You can keep your family and loved ones informed about issues that are important to you and how it is affecting you

### **Looking after yourself**

It is good to take care of your health generally. This will help you feel better in both body and mind and more in control of your life. It will also give your body's defence system a better chance of fighting infection. Some practical tips include:

- **Get enough rest**
- **Reduce stress**
- **Keep as fit as you can but don't tire yourself out**
- **Eat nourishing meals with lots of variety**
- **Reduce or if you can, stop smoking**