

Could I Have HIV?

(Cellular phone ringing with text message)

Did you hook up with Eric Friday?

“I don’t kiss and tell”. (Actress)

(Music playing)

(Cellular phone ringing with text message)

Well, I thought you should know he has HIV; maybe you should get checked.

(Spokesperson)

Have you found yourself in a situation similar to this? Could you?

If you participate in high risk behaviors you should be tested for HIV. High risk behaviors include: unprotected sex with a number of partners or with someone who has many partners, sharing skin piercing instruments and this includes drug needles, unprotected sex with someone at high risk for HIV, or who is currently infected with HIV. The good news is testing is quick, easy and confidential. In most cases no appointment is necessary. Depending on the type of test you take you can have your results the same day you test. Let’s see how easy it is at the Sedgwick County Health Department’s west Central location. This is the receptionist desk. Here you will check in and tell the receptionist what you are here for.

An HIV counselor will discuss HIV risk factors with you and determine how you were potentially exposed to the virus. The HIV counselor will also discuss a risk reduction plan tailored to your individual risk factors. Once your questions are answered then you will take the HIV test. Remember, despite your fear of the unknown you must face the results, whatever they may be. If your results are positive, you must learn ways to best protect yourself and others. If they are negative, you should seek ways to reduce your risk for future infection. In this scenario, the patient is having a rapid HIV test. This test involves a quick finger stick which may sting a bit as the nurse pokes your finger. Afterwards there will be a small droplet of blood that will be collected. The droplet will be placed on a testing device and in 10 minutes you will know your results. The testing device actually detects HIV antibody in the blood sample. If HIV antibodies are detected then the test results are potentially positive so the nurse will have to give you a confirmation test in order to confirm HIV infection. If the testing device does not detect HIV antibody then your test results are negative. Remember the window period. Which simply means that once exposed it could take 3-6 months to detect HIV antibody on an HIV test. It’s just that easy. The sooner you know your status the better you’ll be able to protect yourself and others. For more information call the Sedgwick County Health Department at 660-7300.

In addition to the Health Department there are other locations in Wichita that you can be tested for HIV. You can also be tested at private medical clinics. If you are at risk and don’t get tested at the Health Department, please get tested somewhere.