

INSTI® HIV SELF TEST LICENSING ANNOUNCEMENT

KEY MESSAGES: HIV SELF-TESTING

1. A safe, simple, and effective HIV testing option

- *The INSTI® HIV Self Test is the only self-test for HIV now licensed in Canada, taking one minute to produce highly accurate results (> 99% accurate); a “positive” test result must still be confirmed with a laboratory test available in the health system.*
- *Canadians will now have access to the benefits of rapid HIV self-testing similar to what’s available in the United States, Australia and many parts of Europe, Africa and Asia.*

2. It’s convenient and confidential – and, can be done at home or where someone lives

- *It allows people to test where they are most comfortable to “know their status” and then take control over their own health decisions.*

3. Self-testing is a low barrier option for all Canadians, particularly for those in key population groups still facing stigma associated with HIV

- *Having these accessible and lower barrier HIV tests are particularly important to reduce infection rates in key population groups: Gay, bisexual, and men who have sex with men; Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit People); People of African, Caribbean and other Black descent; and People who use substances and/or inject drugs.*

4. It’s the missing link to reach those who are currently undiagnosed with HIV

- *About 14% of Canadians living with HIV do not know their status and are therefore not able to take the necessary steps to get access to the treatments they need to stay healthy, and to protect others.*

5. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing significant restrictions accessing HIV testing in clinics / labs

- *While HIV self-testing will improve opportunities and access for testing, with the barriers to confirmatory testing and access to care as a result of COVID, we critically need alternative solutions for people who test positive to get access to the health services and supports they will need.*

6. It is also critical to promote connections to care and prevention opportunities for those testing “negative” for HIV infection

- *Access to HIV self-testing allows for people to know their status when it’s helpful to them, and for their health decision-making – this is an opportunity to make sure prevention opportunities (e.g., PrEP and PEP) and health care and other supports are available for those who test negative to help them manage and reduce their risk, in order to stay HIV negative.*

7. Widespread access to HIV self-testing is key to ending the HIV epidemic in Canada

- *Canada joins over 30+ countries around the world who have implemented HIV self-testing. Access to HIV self-testing has resulted in improved HIV diagnosis rates, improved health of those with HIV and has led to a significant decrease in HIV transmission rates, especially when combined with prevention and access to medical technologies like PrEP and PEP.*

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