

what is a CD4 count?

Check your health with a CD4 count

If you have HIV, you should have a regular CD4 count.
This pamphlet explains why.





“I tested HIV positive in 2001, and got ill in 2003. My CD4 count was 193. My doctor recommended that I start **antiretroviral therapy. Today I am very healthy and my CD4 count has improved to 410.”**

Vuyani Jacobs

FOR MOST PEOPLE WITH AIDS, ANTIRETROVIRAL TREATMENT IMPROVES THEIR HEALTH AND CD4 COUNT.

Make a plan for life. Get tested. Monitor your CD4 count. And get treated at the right time.

The nearest clinic where you can get a CD4 count and treatment is:

Government has set a target to treat over 200 000 people with HIV by March 2006. You can help government achieve this goal by getting tested for HIV and encouraging your friends and family to get tested too. If you know someone who is sick with AIDS, help him or her to get treatment at a clinic or hospital.

TAC
TAKING AIDS CARE
TO THE NEXT LEVEL

USE A CONDOM EVERY TIME YOU HAVE SEX.



Thabisile Dlamini

“Our bodies have an immune system that fights diseases. CD4 cells are part of the immune system. Without them, your body can’t fight diseases properly. HIV attacks CD4 cells. This is why people with HIV must regularly measure how many CD4 cells they have. This is done with a CD4 count. By measuring your CD4 cells, you can monitor your health.”

ANTIRETROVIRAL MEDICINES HELP RESTORE OUR CD4 COUNTS TO NORMAL.

How is a CD4 count done?

- You can have your CD4 count taken at many public health clinics.
- A nurse or doctor will take some blood from you.
- The blood will be sent to a lab.
- You will get the results a few days later.
- The nurse or doctor should tell you what your CD4 count is. The number they give you is the amount of CD4 cells you have per drop of blood.

TEST RESULTS

Date specimen taken	20 Oct 2005
Date specimen received	22 Oct 2005
Date specimen reported	23 Oct 2005

DESCRIPTION	RESULT	REFERENCE RANGE
CD4 + Lymphocytes	328 cells/mL	500-2010

This is the number of CD4 cells you have per drop of blood. This person has 328 CD4 cells per drop of blood.

This tells you that a healthy CD4 count is over 500.

- If your CD4 count is above 500, then your immune system is still healthy.
- If your CD4 count is below 350, discuss taking antiretrovirals with your doctor or nurse.
- If your CD4 count is below 200, you should be taking antiretrovirals.

WHEN MOST PEOPLE CONTRACT HIV, THEIR CD4 COUNTS DROP BETWEEN 50 AND 100 EACH YEAR. BUT THIS CAN VARY A LOT FROM PERSON TO PERSON.

Beware of false claims about 'immune boosters' promoted by people who want to make money from untested medicines.