




HIV treatment and care path in Finland

Support and counselling from positiiviset.fi

Before treatment

1 SUSPICION ▶ TEST 

Everyone has the right to an HIV test without a doctor's assessment. You can also access the test anonymously if you wish. HIV testing is available at health centres, both public and private, venereal diseases outpatient clinics, student health services, and local community testing locations such as Positiiviset or Hivpoint.

2 CONFIRMATORY TEST
VENOUS BLOOD SAMPLE 

If the test result is positive, a blood sample will be taken for a confirmatory test. The result will be available in approximately a week. Only after a positive confirmatory test result an HIV diagnosis can be made.

Specialized outpatient clinic

3 REFERRAL TO SPECIALISED OUTPATIENT CLINICS 

HIV is treated in specialized healthcare, for which a referral is required. The referral is issued where the positive HIV test was taken, for example, at the health centre. All HIV-related treatment, care and medication are free of charge in Finland.

4 CONTACT FROM THE CLINIC 

After receiving the referral, you will be contacted by the clinic as soon as possible either by phone or by post. Before the first doctor's appointment, initial laboratory tests will be taken, if possible. In the beginning, a comprehensive assessment requires a lot of laboratory tests to be made.

Specialized outpatient clinic

5 FIRST VISIT AND LABORATORY TESTS 


At the first appointment at the hospital, the treatment process is discussed. During the appointment, the laboratory test results are reviewed, and the medication, wellbeing, and HIV treatment are discussed among other things. Medication is initiated immediately or as soon as possible.

6 SAFETY BLOODS AFTER STARTING WITH MEDICATION 

2-4 weeks after starting the medication, safety blood tests are conducted to check for potential side effects. Safety blood tests assess the suitability of the medication for the user. During the first year of treatment, laboratory tests are taken more frequently. If the results are good, tests are taken ca. every 6 months thereafter.

7 TREATMENT CONTINUES IN OUTPATIENT CLINIC 

When HIV treatment is stable, visits to the doctor occur every 6 months. Every second visit can be replaced by a nurse appointment, and in some regions, it can also be a phone call or an online consultation. Before each appointment, laboratory tests are taken.

Medicines!
 HIV medications can be obtained from the hospital pharmacy. The method of delivery varies by location.

Other health issues
 At your own treatment unit, you can and should ask for additional support, such as psychosocial support or sexual counselling when ever needed.

Treated HIV allows a normal lifespan!
