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HEALTH

HIV self-tests are coming to Australian pharmacies

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Photo: Atomo Diagnostics

Australians will soon be able to test themselves for HIV at home with self-test kits soon to go on sale at pharmacies.

The test kits will cost \$25 each. From mid-December they'll be available, initially at Serafim's pharmacy in Sydney's Taylor Square and Western Australia's 777 pharmacy network.

More pharmacies around the country will also start selling the self-test kits in the new year.

The HIV self-tests, produced by Atomo Diagnostics, are the first and only ones of their type approved by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Atomo co-founder and managing director John Kelly said the company is proud to make the important tool more widely available.

He described the rollout of the self-tests through pharmacies as a "significant step forward" in Australia's fight against HIV transmission.

HIV self-tests a critically important new tool

It's World AIDS Day on Wednesday, which this year is commemorating 40 years of HIV.

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) has welcomed the announcement of the "critically important" HIV self-test kits.

"Testing is absolutely critical to preventing HIV transmission," CEO Darryl O'Donnell said.

"Once people know their status they can start treatment which allows them to completely suppress the virus, preventing further transmission.

"Testing is the first step. This device gives people who wish to test the choice to do so at home.

"While stigma and discrimination are easing they still present barriers for many people knowing their status.

"Being able to perform a finger prick test in the comfort of your own home will encourage more people to test for HIV."

Sydney and WA pharmacies first to sell self-test kits

Sydney-based Serafim Pharmacy's managing director Nick Serafim said the self-tests are an "accurate and convenient" way to test for HIV.

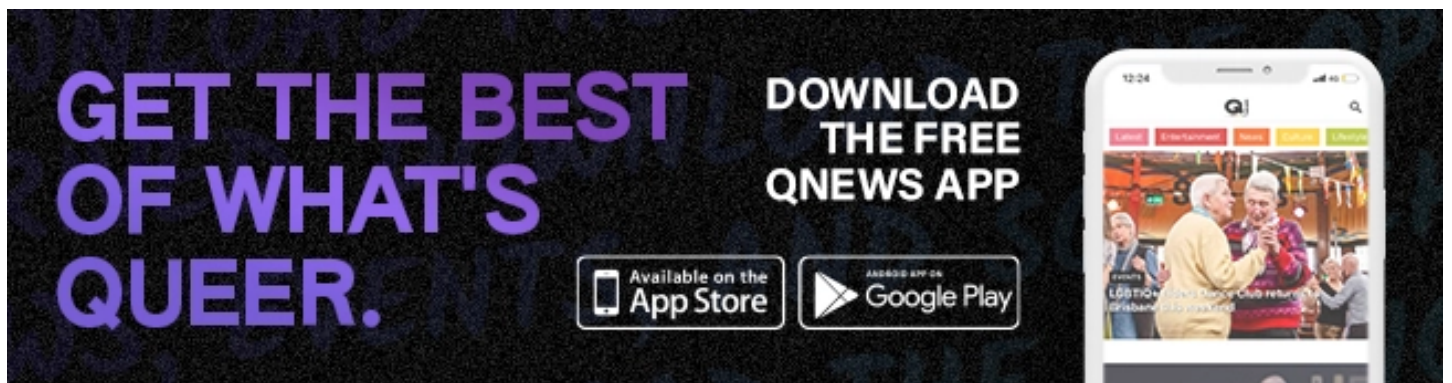
“This in turn enables patients to seek effective treatment options as soon as possible,” he said.

“Serafims Bourke St Pharmacy is stocking the ATOMO HIV Self-Test especially for those patients not getting regular testing through their doctors.”

And in Western Australia, Pharmacy 777 Group’s Kristian Ray said the pharmacies also provide support to connect people to allied health and HIV support services in their local area.

Ray said the company is also working to improve access to support across the state including in regional locations, where local services may be limited.

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