



# GAY COMMUNITY PERIODIC SURVEY



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## Self-test HIV kits will be available from mid-December

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Getting tested for HIV will become easier with greater availability of self-testing kits which will give people more options on how they get tested.

Atomo Diagnostics, the manufacturer and supplier of Australia's only TGA approved HIV Self-Test, and the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) have aligned to help counter the spread of HIV locally.

News of the promotion of new testing option comes ahead of World AIDS Day on 1st December. Self-testing kits have [been available in Australia since 2019](#) but a new initiative is making them more accessible.

The elimination of HIV transmission remains a key focus for both Australia's LGBTIQ Community and the Australian Government, and the availability of self-testing throughout many pharmacies come mid-December, should help toward making that goal more achievable. Atomo's HIV Self-Test is the only

option to support self-monitoring for HIV infection and gives individuals the confidence to take immediate action – allowing them to know their status.

Co-founder and Managing Director of Atomo Diagnostics, John Kelly, said the opening of pharmacy channels for supply of the Atomo HIV Self-Test and the removal of prohibitions on advertising the product and Atomo's direct to consumer website represent a significant step forward in the fight against HIV transmission in Australia.

Kelly said the AFAO's support had assisted in driving these regulatory changes which we believe will materially broaden access to HIV self-testing.

"As we mark the start of HIV Awareness Week, this is a very welcome piece of news," said Darryl O'Donnell, CEO of AFAO. "Testing is absolutely critical to preventing HIV transmission. 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 and this device gives people who wish to test the choice to do so at home." O'Donnell said.

"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."

O'Donnell said there is compelling Australian research to show HIV self-tests will increase testing among people who won't otherwise see a doctor for a test, or who need to test regularly. When the idea of self-testing kits was raised many years ago there was concern that people might not share their diagnosis and seek the necessary follow-up treatment, but [studies have shown](#) that people to engage with medical practitioners.

"The Australian Government's goal is to end HIV transmission. New technologies such as HIV self-tests help power our progress." O'Donnell said.

Atomo is the only company in Australia with an approved HIV self-test listed by TGA on the ARTG and is proud to be able to make this vital home screening tool more widely available to the community.

Western Australia's Pharmacy 777 Group's Kristian Ray said it was proud to get behind such important community health initiative and partner with Atomo Diagnostics to increase the reach of HIV testing to the community.

"Having this Self-Test available in pharmacy is an important step in community pharmacy's role in HIV prevention." Ray said.

According to Ray, Community Pharmacists provide convenient access and support to connect people to allied health and HIV support services in their local area.

"We are also working to improve access to support across the state including in regional locations where local services may be limited."

The devices will retail for \$25 each. Initially, they will be available at Serafim's pharmacy at Taylor Square in Sydney and the 777 pharmacy network in WA before coming to other pharmacies in the new year.

*Graeme Watson*

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***Get the facts about living with HIV at WAAC.***

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