



WE DID IT!

HIV screening test:
the answers to all your questions!

Questions are color-coded for specific topics

GENERAL QUESTIONS



QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL INTERCOURSE



QUESTIONS ABOUT DRUGS



QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HIV SCREENING TEST





HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus – infection reduces the body's immune response to fight infections, therefore allowing diseases to develop in the body and to have a more severe outcome. Each year in Luxembourg, more than 70 people test positive to this infection. For these people, medical care is necessary. Medical care enables infected people to have a better quality of life and, more importantly, prevents the occurrence of more opportunistic diseases.

The National Committee overseeing AIDS estimates that between 300 and 400 people in Luxembourg live with the HIV virus and are unaware of having been infected! This not only puts their life in danger but it also increases the risk of transmitting the virus! The only way to know if a person is a carrier for the virus is to do a screening test.

WHAT IS THE HIV SCREENING TEST?

The screening test is a simple, safe and effective way to detect HIV infection. The test detects the presence of anti-HIV antibodies in the blood and is carried out as a blood test. These antibodies are produced by the body at the earliest 2 weeks after being exposed to the HIV virus and at the latest 12 weeks after the exposure has occurred.

A negative result to the screening test is only 100% reliable when taken 12 weeks after having been exposed, as long as the person has not been exposed to a new risk of infection during this time and has used a condom during these 12 weeks.

HIV-POSITIVE, HIV-NEGATIVE... WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?



A “**positive**” result means that the test has detected the presence of anti-HIV anti-bodies. The person is **HIV positive**, therefore, a carrier for the HIV virus. It is then very important to consult a doctor to benefit from medical care and, if necessary, antiretroviral therapy. It is nowadays possible to live for a long time with the HIV virus if you maintain your good health.

A result indicating **“indeterminate”** or “partially positive” may be due to the presence of another disease or to a very recent exposure to HIV. It is necessary to talk to a doctor and do another screening test.

If the result is **“negative”** and the test has been carried out 12 weeks or more after exposure, you can be certain not to have contracted the HIV virus during this period. A “negative” result indicates that the screening test did not detect the anti-HIV antibodies and that there was no infection. The person is **HIV negative**.

It is always necessary to repeat an “indeterminate” or “positive” test on a second blood sample to ensure there was no mistake in the labelling or handling of the results. It is only after this second test that the patient can be determined a carrier for the virus.

WHO IS CONCERNED BY THE SCREENING TEST?



Anyone who has had at least once a potential exposure to the HIV virus. As a reminder, an exposure to the virus includes any situation where potentially HIV-contaminated liquid (blood, sperm, vaginal secretions, breast milk) is in contact with a body orifice (open wound and/or mucus: vaginal, anal, oral, nasal, ocular and penile).

WHEN TO DO A SCREENING TEST?

12 weeks after being exposed. Only after this period is the HIV screening test reliable at a 100%. 12 weeks is the time needed for the body to produce the antibodies against the virus after the HIV infection.

After 12 weeks, the result of the screening test is reliable: a “negative” result indicates that the test has not detected such antibodies, therefore, there has not been an infection. On the other hand, a “positive” result indicates that anti-HIV antibodies have been detected and there has been an infection.

If you do the test before the waiting period of 12 weeks, it may be too early: a negative result at this time can become positive when tested later. The reliability of the results after 4 weeks is already of 85% but it is only reliable to 100% after 12 weeks.

72 hours after exposure. Upon consultation with a doctor, it is still possible to complete an emergency treatment called PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) within 72 hours. This will also allow you to determine whether the result is HIV-negative before exposure.

IMPORTANT! It is during the primary infection period (between 15 days and 12 weeks after infection) that the risk of HIV transmission is the highest.

I HAD UNPROTECTED SEX 2-3 WEEKS AGO AND FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS, I HAVE FEVER, SORE THROAT AND SKIN RASH. SHOULD I TAKE AN HIV TEST?

YES! A majority of people will present with symptoms such as fever, sore throat, skin rash during the seroconversion phase (when the body starts to produce HIV antibodies). A screening test for antigens could already be positive at this time.

ATTENTION! It is at this period of seroconversion that the risk of HIV transmission is the highest. When you are unsure of the test result, it is therefore critical to use a condom after unprotected sex. If the result is “negative”, a second test must be done 12 weeks after exposure in order to obtain a 100% reliable result on the screening test.

I AM SINGLE AND I FREQUENTLY HAD ONE NIGHT STANDS. SHOULD I TAKE A TEST?

If you do not use a condom during every sexual intercourse and you have had several sexual partners throughout the year, it is recommended to do a test every 3 months.

If, on the other hand, you are using a condom for every sexual intercourse, one test a year is enough.

A photograph of a man with dark, slightly messy hair, wearing a red, green, and white plaid shirt. He is looking down with his hands clasped together in front of his face, resting his chin on them. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

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SCREENING CENTRES
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MY PARTNER AND I HAVE BEEN A COUPLE FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND WE ARE EXCLUSIVE. WOULD WE BENEFIT FROM TAKING THE TEST?

By doing a test, you will gain information on your HIV status. If you have never done a screening test, we recommend you to do one.

HIV infection may not show symptoms for years! This is why it is important to be tested even if you are in an exclusive and faithful relationship!

I HAD UNPROTECTED SEX WITH A NEW PARTNER AND HE/SHE SEEMED IN GOOD HEALTH. SHOULD I STILL TAKE A TEST?

OF COURSE! HIV infection has no specific symptoms. Many HIV-positive individuals do not know their HIV status and do not do screening tests because they are in good health. It is important to do a screening test as soon as there has been unprotected sex. Even if in certain cases the antibodies anti-HIV can be detected after a few weeks, it is only when the test is done 12 weeks after unprotected sex that the results are 100% reliable, as long as the person has not been exposed to a new risk of infection during this time and has used a condom during these 12 weeks.

I AM GAY AND I HAVE HEARD THAT IF I HAVE MULTIPLE PARTNERS, I HAVE TO BE REGULARLY TESTED. IS THIS RIGHT?



DEFINITELY! Unfortunately, a large number of HIV-positive people don't know that they are infected and the risk of becoming infected during homosexual intercourse without a condom is very high. It is important to use the condom during anal intercourse and oral sex, and to do screening test regularly, for example, every 3 months. In addition, it is important to be tested for other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), such as gonorrhea, chlamydia infection and syphilis.

I HAVE DOUBTS THAT MY PARTNER IS FAITHFUL. WOULD A TEST BE USEFUL?

A test will tell your HIV status, whether positive or negative, but it won't prove if your partner has been unfaithful.

MY PARTNER HAS TOLD ME ABOUT HAVING BEEN UNFAITHFUL AND WE ARE NOW CONCERNED ABOUT OUR HEALTH. WHAT SHALL WE DO?

If your partner has had unprotected sex, it is important that you both do the screening test 12 weeks after exposure. In addition, in order to be sure you have not contracted other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), it is important to screen for these as well: e.g. chlamydia infection, gonorrhoea, syphilis or herpes. The best is to ask your doctor for a full STD check-up.

MY BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND AND I HAVE BEEN TOGETHER FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AND WE USE A CONDOM. IF WE GET TESTED, CAN WE STOP USING CONDOMS?

YES! As soon as you have received your respective test results, as long as these are negative and you remain faithful! Do not forget that the results are only 100% reliable if you haven't been exposed in the 12 weeks before the test!



I HAVE BEEN RAPED OR SEXUALLY ABUSED. SHOULD I TAKE THE TEST?

IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU DO THE TEST! If the sexual assault/rape has occurred less than 72 hours ago, you must attend the Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg (CHL) or any other emergency service in order to consult a doctor who can not only prescribe you the emergency therapy against HIV, but also administer a screening test for HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases. This test will determine your HIV status at the time of the attack. Another test will need to be done at least 12 weeks after the sexual assault or rape to determine whether you have been infected.

In case of a rape, immediately contact emergency services (112) and the police (113) to receive the necessary information and the support.

WHEN I WOKE UP, I CAN'T RECALL ALL THE DETAILS FROM THE EVENING BEFORE...

Take a test that will tell your HIV status. However, you must re-test 12 weeks after the evening to determine whether you have been infected.



I OCCASIONALLY SNORT COCAINE AND I WAS TOLD THERE WAS A TRANSMISSION RISK. SHOULD I TAKE A SCREENING TEST?

The risk of HIV transmission when snorting cocaine or other substances is minimal. On the other hand, the risk is real for Hepatitis C virus transmission if there has been an exchange of straws.

I HAVE BEEN INJECTING HEROIN. SHOULD I TAKE A TEST?

YES! Especially if you have been using someone else's syringe! Remember that in addition to HIV, the Hepatitis C virus is easily transmitted through the blood and, therefore when exchanging syringes.

A blood test can detect Hepatitis C when administered 12 weeks after contamination. If you have used someone else's equipment to snort or inject drugs, consult your doctor who will prescribe a screening test for Hepatitis C. It is also possible to take a rapid screening test for Hepatitis C at the Dimps (see location and visiting times of the Dimps on sida.lu or dimps.lu).



I'VE BEEN INADVERTENTLY PRICKED BY A USED SYRINGE. WHAT SHALL I DO?

If you've been accidentally pricked by a used syringe less than 72 hours ago, immediately go to the Centre Hospitalier of Luxembourg (CHL) or to any other hospital emergency service to receive the emergency therapy (PEP therapy). An initial HIV screening test will be administered and the doctor will prescribe you the emergency therapy which consists of taking 3 pills, 2 times per day for a month. Attention, this treatment is most effective when started as early as possible after the incident. If you haven't had the opportunity to go to the CHL or other emergency service within the first 72 hours after the incident, you must take a test more than 12 weeks after the incident to know whether you have been infected.

If less than 72 hours have occurred since the exposure incident, immediately go to a hospital emergency services in order to receive the emergency therapy (PEP therapy).

I AM PREGNANT AND MY OBGYN HAS PRESCRIBED ME WITH A SCREENING TEST. WHY?

The screening test during pregnancy is designed to protect the baby in case of HIV infection of the mother. Today, thanks to HIV antiretroviral treatments, the virus transmission from the mother to the baby can be avoided! If the mother is diagnosed HIV positive during her pregnancy, she receives a treatment designed to reduce the amount of virus in the blood, which

then reduces the risk of transmission to the baby. Once born, another treatment administered to the baby for a month will protect him against the virus entering his body during birth. With this treatment, the transmission from mother to child is almost non-existent in Luxembourg!

WARNING: HIV positive mothers cannot breastfeed their babies as breast milk also contains a large amount of the virus!



THE CONDOM BROKE AND I DON'T KNOW WHETHER MY PARTNER IS HIV POSITIVE. WHAT SHALL I DO?



If less than 72 hours have occurred since the exposure (condom breaking), you must immediately go to the Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg (CHL) or to any other hospital emergency service in order to consult a doctor who will evaluate the risk of transmission and can then prescribe the emergency treatment (PEP). An initial HIV screening test will be administered and if judged to be necessary by the doctor, he will prescribe you the emergency therapy which consists of taking 3 pills, 2 times per day for a month. Attention: this treatment is most effective when started as early as possible after the incident. If you haven't had the opportunity to go to the CHL or other emergency service within the first 72 hours after the incident, you must take a test more than 12 weeks after the incident to know whether you have been infected.

IMPORTANT: the PEP therapy is not comparable to the morning after pill and has many side effects! No emergency treatment can replace the use of condoms!

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**I AM HIV NEGATIVE.
DOES IT MEAN I'M PROTECTED AGAINST HIV?**

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NO! An HIV negative test indicates that there are not anti-HIV antibodies in the blood, therefore no infection.

A negative result never protects against further infection!

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CAN PEOPLE TAKE MORE THAN ONE TEST A YEAR?

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YES! It is recommended to take a test every 3 months if you have been exposed several times a year. It is best to avoid exposure and/or to always use a condom.

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**SHOULD YOU BE FASTING
TO TAKE THE SCREENING TEST?**

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NO, no need to be fasting to take the HIV screening test.





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SCREENING CENTRES
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WHERE CAN I GO TO TAKE THE SCREENING TEST?

The “classic” test:

- Book a visit with your doctor who will write you a prescription. With this prescription, you may take the test in any lab or hospital in the country
- In a screening centre where the test is free and remains anonymous (CHL, ZITHA KLINIK, HK, CHEM, CHDN, LNS, see addresses and opening times at the end of this brochure)

You will receive your result several days later. The latest generation of screening tests can provide you with a reliable result 12 weeks after the last exposure.

...AND IF I WANT TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS?

5 centres offer anonymous and free testing:

In Luxembourg:

– Centre Hospitalier (CHL)
Service des Maladies
Infectieuses (2nd floor)
4, rue Barblé
L-1210 Luxembourg
weekday: 7am to 3pm
www.chl.lu

– Zitha Klinik
36, rue Ste Zithe
L-2763 Luxembourg
weekday: 11am to 6pm
www.zitha.lu

– Hôpital Kirchberg
9, rue Edward Steichen
L-2540 Luxembourg
weekday: 7am to 7pm
saturday: 7am to 10am
www.hkb.lu

In Esch/Alzette:

– Centre Hospitalier
Emile Mayrisch
rue Emile Mayrisch
L-4240 Esch/Alzette
weekday: 7am to 5pm
www.chem.lu

In Ettelbrück:

– Centre Hospitalier du
Nord - St Louis
120, Avenue Lucien Salentyng
L-9080 Ettelbrück
weekday: 10am to 2pm
www.chdn.lu

In Dudelange:

– LNS
(Laboratoire National de Santé)
Rue Louis Rech
L-3555 Dudelange
weekday: 7h³⁰am to 9am
www.lns.public.lu

After the blood test, a number will be given to you, which you will need 2 to 3 days later in order to pick up your test results. You will receive the results orally and, since it is anonymous, you will not receive a document indicating the HIV positive or HIV negative result.

HOW DOES THE TEST WORK?

The screening test consists of a simple blood test. The blood is then analysed in a lab. For a fast test, a drop of blood is taken from the tip of a finger and the drop is mixed with a chemical.

ATTENTION! A fast test indicates that the result is obtained quickly after the blood test and not that the test is reliable if it has been done less than 12 weeks since the exposure. Any test with an inconclusive or positive result needs to be followed by a blood test for a more detailed analysis.

WHERE CAN I TAKE THE RAPID TEST?

The rapid tests can be done at the DIMPS (dispositif d'intervention mobile pour la promotion de la santé sexuelle – mobile intervention centre for the promotion of sexual health) and soon, at the HIVberodung. Visit www.dimps.lu for the location and times of the DIMPS.



Visit www.sida.lu to obtain the opening times for screening at the HIVberodung.

HOW RELIABLE ARE THE TESTS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET?

Countries of the European Community have not given permission to the sale and purchase of tests available on the internet. It is strongly recommended not to buy a fast HIV screening test on the internet. Firstly, their reliability is not proven, then, a screening test is a not a routine act. Qualified personnel are needed to accurately read and interpret the results of the test as well as to provide the necessary support. If you'd like to take a fast test, please visit the HIVberodung where you will receive personalized advice.

HOW LONG DO I NEED TO WAIT TO RECEIVE THE RESULTS OF THE TEST?

Usually, the results are available at the latest 3 workdays after the test.

DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR AN HIV TEST?

NO, the screening test is free. It entirely paid by the National Healthcare (Caisse Nationale de Santé), or in case of an anonymous test, by the Department of Health.

CAN I TAKE A TEST IF I'M A MINOR?

YES, there is no legal age to take a screening test. However, it is important to note that professionals are not bound by professional secrecy as long as the minor does not put his life in danger. In the case of a positive result and therefore, medical care, the doctor may offer to assist you by informing your parents.

MY DOCTOR PRESCRIBES REGULAR BLOOD TESTS. I ASSUME THAT THE HIV TEST IS ALSO TESTED FOR. IS THIS RIGHT?

NO, the HIV screening test is not automatically tested for in regular blood tests. If you would like to be tested, you must specifically ask for the test.

A doctor cannot prescribe an HIV screening test without your informed consent!

CAN SOMEONE FORCE ME TO TAKE A SCREENING TEST?

NO, nobody can legally force you to take an HIV screening test. However, it is important to know that the majority of life insurances companies require a screening test to assess the amount of the insurance premium. If the test is HIV positive, they can refuse to issue a life insurance or they may offer a higher premium.

MY PARTNER HAS SHARED HIS/HER TEST RESULTS WITH ME AND THEY ARE HIV NEGATIVE. CAN I TRUST HIM/HER?

The results of your partner's test are only valid if you are sure they have not been exposed either in the 12 weeks prior to the results, or since sharing the test results with you.



GLOSSARY

Antibodies: antibodies are produced by white blood cells and are the body's immune response to infection. They can be compared to weapons produced to fight against a particular infection.

Antigens: antigens are foreign substances that cause a reaction of the body's immune system, such as a reaction to produce antibodies.

STD: Sexually Transmitted Diseases: infections, often asymptomatic, transmitted through intercourse and/or sexual fondling, for example, gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis and herpes.

PEP: Post-Exposure Prophylaxis: emergency therapy administered after a potential exposure to HIV. The emergency therapy is only effective if it is started at the latest 72 hours after the exposure.

Immune System: system to defend the body against various infections, bacteria, microbes, viruses, parasites etc.

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HCV: the Hepatitis C Virus is transmitted by blood. The risk of transmission most frequently occurs in the following situations: sharing intravenous drug injection equipment, sharing snorting equipment and anal penetration.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

HIVberodung - Croix-Rouge

94, bvd. Patton
L-2316 Luxembourg
T: 2755 4500
www.croix-rouge.lu

Stop Aids Now/Access

c/o HIVberodung -
Croix-Rouge
94, Bvd Patton
L-2316 Luxembourg
T: 406 251
www.sida.lu

Centre Hospitalier (CHL)

Service des Maladies
Infectieuses (2nd floor)
4, rue Barblé
L-1210 Luxembourg
*Screening available
weekday: 7am to 3pm*
www.chl.lu

Hôpital Kirchberg

9, rue Edward Steichen
L-2540 Luxembourg
*Screening available
weekday: 7am to 7pm
Saturday: 7am to 10am*
www.hkb.lu

Zitha Klinik

36, rue Ste Zithe
L-2763 Luxembourg
*Screening available
weekday: 11am to 6pm*
www.zitha.lu

Centre Hospitalier Emile Mayrisch

rue Emile Mayrisch
L-4240 Esch/Alzette
*Screening available
weekday: 7am to 5pm*
www.chem.lu

Centre Hospitalier du Nord - St Louis

120, Avenue Lucien
Salentiny
L-9080 Ettelbrück
*Screening available
weekday: 10am to 2pm*
www.chdn.lu

LNS

(Laboratoire National
de Santé)
Rue Louis Rech
L-3555 Dudelange
*Screening available
weekday: 7h³⁰am to
9am*
T: 281 001
www.lns.public.lu

DIMPS

(Dispositif d'Interven-
tion Mobile pour la
Promotion de la Santé
sexuelle)
www.dimps.lu for the
Dimps visiting times
and locations

Ministère de la Santé

Direction de la Santé
Division de la Médecine
Préventive et Sociale
Allée Marconi
L-2120 Luxembourg
www.sante.lu

Laboratoires

Ketter-Thill
T: 488 288 1
www.llam.lu

Laboratoires Forges du Sud

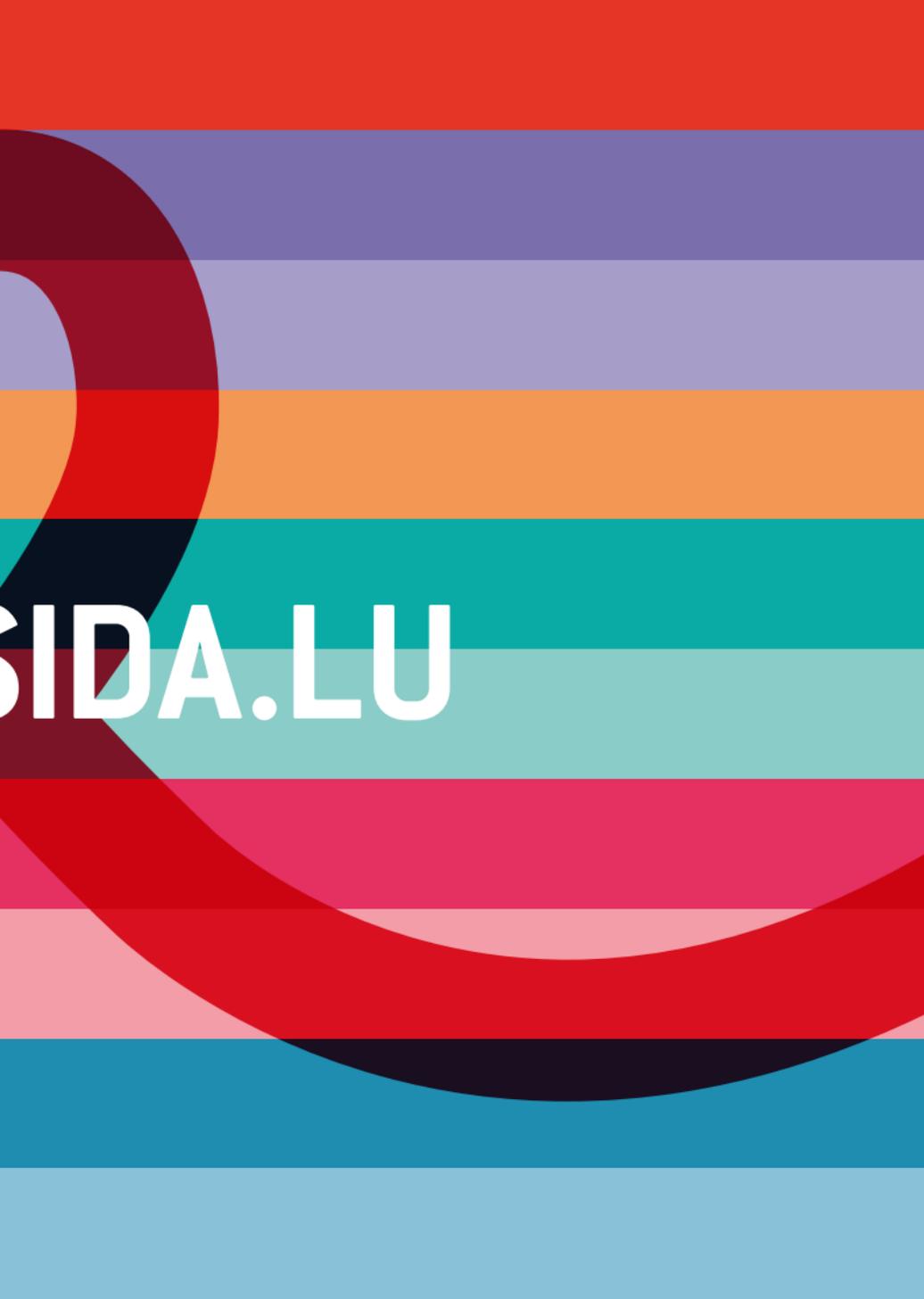
T: 518 058
www.labtalon.lu

Laboratoires Réunis

T: 780 290 1
www.labo.lu



www.s



SIDA.LU



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de la Santé

Direction de la santé

croix-rouge 
luxembourgeoise
Santé **HIV Berodung**
Hépatites, IST et VIH



STOPAIDSNOWACCES
action de coopération pour l'environnement et la santé

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