Wake up to HIV
Get tested

www.hiv-wakeup.org.uk
Are you a man who has sex with men?

If so, you could be more at risk of becoming HIV positive.
You have the right to a healthy and satisfying sex life. Staying healthy is important and shows you respect yourself and the partners you have. Getting tested on a regular basis will help you look after your health.

Did you know?
67%* of cases of HIV in Scotland occur among men who have sex with men. On average, men who get HIV through sex with other men don’t get diagnosed for around four years after infection occurs.

Do you always use condoms and lube? If not, your risk of becoming HIV positive will be higher. If you’ve been taking risks and having unprotected sex, arrange to have an HIV test.

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is an infection that damages your immune system, so you’re more likely to catch other harmful infections.

HIV is not just another sexually transmitted infection (STI). There is no cure but once it is diagnosed you can start treatment that will help you live a longer, healthier life.

HIV is found in semen, pre-cum, anal mucous and blood. You can catch or pass on HIV if any of these fluids get into the bloodstream through sores, cuts or inflamed skin.

Find out more about HIV at www.hiv-wakeup.org.uk

‘What is HIV?’
You will be at risk of HIV:

- If you have unprotected anal sex without condoms and lube as the skin inside your anus can be easily torn allowing the HIV infection into your bloodstream.

- If you give oral sex and he ejaculates in your mouth. If you have cuts or sores in your mouth, this could allow HIV to get into your blood.

- If you have rough sex, long sessions, fisting and fingering, and douches. These can irritate the lining of the anus so it gets infected more easily.

- If you use drugs and alcohol, they may stop you noticing any pain or bleeding.

Whether you are the receptive or active partner, you are still at risk of HIV if you have unprotected anal sex.

If you have an STI such as chlamydia, syphilis or gonorrhoea, then you will be more vulnerable to HIV.

Remember:
Always use a condom and lube – get condoms that fit properly. Change the condom every 30 minutes during long sessions and use a fresh one for every partner. Put condoms on shared sex toys and wear latex gloves for fisting. Plenty of lube stops wear and tear on the anus and condoms.

If you know you have been taking risks and having unprotected sex, arrange to get an HIV test as soon as possible.

Check out your risk at www.hiv-wakeup.org.uk
‘Why should I get tested?’

The earlier HIV is diagnosed, the better the treatment options and the longer your life expectancy. This is because the infection will have done less damage to your immune system.

If you have put yourself at risk and have symptoms such as a fever, rash, mouth ulcers, joint and muscle pain, weight loss, tiredness or chronic diarrhoea, these can be associated with HIV. Having a test can rule this out.

‘When should I get tested?’

Get an HIV test if you’ve never been tested before or if you’ve had unprotected sex since your last test. Continue to get tested at least every six months if you are sexually active.

If you contract HIV, you won’t have signs of the infection in your blood straight away – this can take some weeks but is usually apparent within two to three months.

If you have had unprotected sex in the three months before getting tested, you will be advised to get tested again just in case the infection isn’t showing yet.
Blood will be taken from your arm or your finger. This will be sent to a lab to see if there are any signs of HIV in your blood.

Your result will be negative, positive or undetermined. An undetermined result means you will need another test as it is not clear whether the HIV infection is in your body and is not yet fully developed (the ‘window period’).

Remember:
Results are usually available in a week.
‘What do the results mean?’
‘Negative’

If there are no signs of HIV in your blood, then your test will be ‘negative’.

This doesn’t mean you are immune and won’t get HIV, or that all your partners have been free of HIV. Don’t take unnecessary risks. Use condoms and lube and get tested regularly.

Remember:
If you test before three months have passed since your last risk, then there is a chance your test results might not be accurate. So get tested again a few weeks later to make sure.

‘Positive’

If signs of infection are found in your blood, then the test will be ‘positive’.

This means you have HIV. You’ll be offered counselling or advice to help you understand what this means and what support is available. It can be a shock but finding out means you and your doctor can decide what ongoing care is right for you.

Remember:
Testing positive doesn’t mean you have AIDS or will get it. AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) is the name for a range of illnesses people with HIV can get. With early access to good and effective treatment, most people with HIV don’t develop AIDS and can live a longer, healthier life.
Get a free, confidential sexual health check-up, including an HIV test, from any GUM or sexual health clinic. It doesn’t have to be the nearest one to you. Your GP will offer HIV testing or refer you to somewhere that does.

Wherever you get your test, your details and the result will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone else, unless you agree to it.

Find out where to get tested at www.hiv-wakeup.org.uk

Remember:
If you are HIV positive and have unprotected sex or share needles then you could pass it on. If you think you have put others at risk of getting HIV, talk to clinic staff or your doctor about how to tell them and what help is available.
If you are looking for testing services, free condoms and lube, or have any questions about HIV, visit www.hiv-wakeup.org.uk

You can also call the Sexual Health Information Line on 0800 121 4590 available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.