

What does HIV stand for?

HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS

What does AIDS stand for?

ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME

What is the difference between HIV and AIDS?

HIV

HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system and weakens the body's ability to fight infections, and can be transmitted from one person to another. There is no cure for HIV.

AIDS

AIDS is a set of illnesses, sometimes called opportunistic infections, that affect people with HIV when their immune system is depleted. AIDS cannot be transmitted from one person to another.

It is important to understand that HIV is the virus that is transmitted between people and AIDS cannot be transmitted. So, people can have HIV without having an AIDS diagnosis but someone with an AIDS diagnosis will have HIV.

How can you get HIV?



Sharing equipment

Sharing injecting drug equipment.



Unprotected sex (no condom)

Sexual contact: having unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex with someone who has HIV, including sharing sex toys.



Mother to child

May occur while the child is in utero (in the womb), during childbirth or breastfeeding.

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There are five body fluids which contain sufficient quantities of HIV for transmission to occur:

1. Blood
2. Semen
3. Vaginal fluid
4. Menstrual blood
5. Breast milk

If these fluids are not present then HIV transmission cannot occur.

Ways you **CANNOT** get HIV:

1. Shaking Hands
2. Sharing a glass
3. Hugging
4. Kissing
5. Using a public toilet
6. Being bitten by a mosquito

Can HIV live outside the body?

In normal atmospheric conditions, HIV can only live outside the body for a short period of time. This is why direct contact is necessary for transmission.



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Signs and symptoms of HIV infection

Soon after being infected with HIV some people experience 'flu-like' symptoms, such as fever, headache, tiredness and a rash. Other people may not have any symptoms at all. This is why the **ONLY** way to know if you have HIV is by having a test.

People with HIV can feel and look healthy. Many do not realise they have HIV because they do not see or feel anything wrong. Without knowing it they can pass HIV on to their partners.

Testing for HIV

The only way to find out if you have HIV is to have a blood test. Often when people ask for STI tests they only test the urine, which does not test for HIV. When going for an STI test always ask for a HIV test or a blood test.

Testing for HIV

It is important to understand that HIV cannot be detected in a test until after 6 weeks after the virus enters to body, this is called the 'window period'. Therefore you will need to be tested 6 weeks from the possible infection date in order to have accurate HIV test results.

What is meant by the Window Period?

The window period is the time lag between when the immune system produces HIV antibodies, and when these antibodies can be detected by an HIV antibody test. This test looks for the presence of HIV antibodies, not the virus itself. It can take 2-12 weeks for

enough antibodies to be detectable. If a first test come back negative, it may mean that insufficient detectable HIV antibodies are present, even though the person is infected with HIV. A second test is recommended 12 weeks after the risk of infection occurred.

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What is the best way to minimise HIV transmission in relation to penetrative sex?

- Condoms, used correctly, with water based lubricant during sex
- Never sharing injecting drug equipment
- Avoiding breast feeding when the mother is HIV positive

How safe is oral sex?

Oral sex is a relatively low risk activity, provided there are no cuts, scratches or sores in or around the mouth that might provide an entry point for HIV. Oral sex is safer if condoms or dams are used.

Treatment

Currently, there is no cure for HIV. However, HIV can be managed with treatment and the majority of people living with HIV go on to have normal lives.



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