

HIV/AIDS Facts

What is the difference between HIV and AIDS?

HIV STANDS FOR HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS.

If you are infected with HIV, there is a likelihood that you will eventually develop AIDS. Once HIV infects your body, your immune system attempts to fight the virus, but it is unable to destroy it. Because of the way HIV attacks your immune system, it becomes less effective in fighting off other infections which your body is exposed to or carrying. Gradually your immune system becomes weaker and weaker. Symptoms that may occur once a person is infected with HIV include:

- Night sweats
- Nausea
- Chronic diarrhea
- Prolonged fever and/or flu-like symptoms
- Significant weight loss

AIDS STANDS FOR ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME.

A physician will diagnose a person with AIDS if they are HIV infected and have a T-Cell count below 200 or an opportunistic infection.

Many people who are infected with HIV may appear and feel healthy for several years, but they are still infected and can benefit from treatment. With no intervention/treatment by a medical provider, much more serious infections can occur and an AIDS diagnosis may be made on average from 3-15 years after infection.

Many people infected with HIV develop a compromised immune system and acquire infections which healthy individuals do not normally acquire, or may take longer to clear common infections. There are medications used to help fight infections that occur because of the HIV infection as well as medications used to help prevent the development of AIDS after becoming HIV infected.

HIV IS THE DISEASE TRANSMITTED FROM INFECTED INDIVIDUALS. THERE ARE TESTS THAT CAN DETECT HIV ANTIBODIES.

AIDS IS A SYNDROME, A SET OF SYMPTOMS, AND CANNOT BE TRANSMITTED. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN AIDS TEST.

Why should I be concerned about HIV?

Although HIV is a life-threatening disease, it is easily prevented. Despite this, cases of HIV infection and AIDS diagnoses are rapidly growing globally.

Regardless of these statistics, many people still do not understand how the virus is transmitted, refuse to protect themselves despite understanding how to do so, or simply do not believe they are at risk.

How is HIV transmitted and how do I protect myself?

Because someone infected with HIV may have no symptoms for many years, other people are unable to tell if they are infected. Most people do not even know if they are infected because they have not been tested for the HIV antibodies. HIV is transmitted when the following are exchanged from one person to another:

- Blood
- Semen
- Vaginal fluids
- Breast milk

Anytime these fluids are exchanged, you have put yourself at risk for HIV.

Transmission and Prevention (Continued on page 2)

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE CONSIDERED **SAFE** (NON-RISK):

- Abstinence
- Casual contact
- Touching
- Hugging
- Lip kissing
- Breathing the same air
- Eating together
- Eating food prepared by someone who is HIV infected
- Mutual masturbation (with no exchange of body fluids)
- Donating blood
- Working with someone who is HIV infected

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE CONSIDERED **FAIRLY SAFE** (THERE IS SOME RISK, TAKE CAUTION):

- Vaginal or anal intercourse **WITH** correct use of condom.
- Oral sex - fellatio (mouth/penis contact) with **NO** ejaculation into the mouth.
- Oral sex - cunnilingus (mouth/vagina contact) when **NO** menstrual blood or inflammation are present.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE CONSIDERED **UNSAFE** (HIGH RISK):

- Unprotected (without a condom) vaginal/anal intercourse with ejaculation near or within the vagina or anus.
- Pulling-out before ejaculation **IS NOT SAFE** since the pre-ejaculate fluid has already come in contact with the body.
- Oral sex - fellatio (mouth/penis contact) with ejaculation into the mouth.
- Oral sex/cunnilingus - (mouth/vagina contact) with a woman who is menstruating.
- Sharing non-sterile needles for drugs, steroids, tattooing, ear piercing, or any skin breaking activity.
- Having sex under the influence of alcohol and/or any other psychoactive (mood altering) substances since one's judgment of what may be safe can be clouded.

Using a Condom

Although condoms are not 100% effective in preventing HIV transmission, pregnancy, or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), they offer excellent protection when used properly. To use a condom correctly:

1. Use a new, unopened, non-expired latex condom for every new sexual act.
2. As soon as the penis is erect, open the condom and make sure it is going to roll on the right direction. If condom is placed on penis inside out, discard and begin with a new condom.
3. Squeeze the tip of the condom and while holding the tip, roll the condom down the erect penis all the way to the base. Make sure there is no air in the tip of the condom at the head of the penis.
4. The penis can then be inserted into the body and intercourse can occur.
5. Immediately following ejaculation, one of the partners should hold the base of the condom onto the penis and pull the penis out.
6. The man should then move away from his partner and roll the condom off the penis.
7. The condom should be thrown away in the trash, do not flush it down the toilet.

NEVER USE VASELINE, HAND LOTION, MASSAGE OIL, OR ANY OTHER OIL-BASED LUBRICANT WITH CONDOMS.

THE OIL DISINTEGRATES THE LATEX AND BREAKAGE WILL OCCUR.

FOR ADDED LUBRICATION, USE A WATER OR SILICON BASED LUBRICANT LIKE KY JELLY OR ASTROGLIDE.

NEVER USE ANIMAL SKIN (I.E. SHEEP OR LAMB SKIN) CONDOMS AS THEY HAVE TINY PORES THAT CAN ALLOW BACTERIA AND VIRUSES TO PASS THROUGH THE CONDOM.

NEVER STORE YOUR CONDOMS IN A WARM OR DIRECTLY LIT PLACE. STRONG LIGHT OR HEAT WILL WEAKEN THE LATEX.

For More Information:

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