



### WHAT ARE HIV AND AIDS?

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. It weakens a person's immune system by destroying important cells that fight disease and infection. There is currently no effective cure for HIV. But with proper medical care, HIV can be controlled. Some groups of people are more likely to get HIV than others because of many factors, including their sex partners and risky behavior.

AIDS, or the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is the late stage of HIV infection that occurs when the body's immune system is badly damaged because of the virus.

In the U.S., most people with HIV do not develop AIDS because taking HIV medicine every day as prescribed stops the progression of the disease.

You need to know the signs of HIV/AIDS, and how to avoid getting this deadly disease.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### Centers for Disease Control

[www.cdc.gov/hiv/default.html](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/default.html)

#### HIV U.S. Government Resource

[www.hiv.gov/](http://www.hiv.gov/)

# HIV & AIDS

WHY YOU ARE STILL AT RISK



**in the know**

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### SIX FACTS ABOUT HOW HIV/AIDS IS SPREAD

- Blood, semen and saliva all can spread HIV, as can a woman's vaginal fluid
- Blood and semen carry larger quantities of the virus than saliva or vaginal fluid
- Sex without a condom is the most common way HIV is spread
- Anal sex is the easiest way to spread HIV, because semen can pass easily into the bloodstream through the anus
- Sharing needles for tattooing or drug use can spread HIV
- Any contact with infected blood, semen or saliva can spread the virus. This is why health care workers wear protective gloves and clothing.

### THREE STAGES OF INFECTION

Stage 1: HIV weakens your body's immune system, which is how your body fights illnesses and infections. There are no outward signs or symptoms in stage one, only a test can detect the HIV virus.

Stage 2: Symptoms of infection begin to show, including:

- Swelling of the lymph glands, found in the neck, armpits, and back of mouth
- Feeling very tired all the time
- Weight loss for no reason
- Continuing fever
- Diarrhea for several days

Stage 3: This is when HIV becomes AIDS. The infected person still has the symptoms of stage two, and their immune system is completely destroyed.



Any illness or disease could be fatal to someone at this stage, even a common cold. The most common opportunistic infections are pneumonia and a type of cancer known as "Kaposi's sarcoma."

### TREATMENT

HIV/AIDS has no cure. Several drugs can either slow the spread of the virus, or decrease the force of attack from opportunistic infections. AZT (zidovudine) is a common medicine used to fight HIV. AZT's common brand name is Retrovir. Advances in medication have made HIV a chronic but treatable disease.

### HOW YOU CAN AVOID GETTING HIV/AIDS

Avoiding sexual contact and needles is the best way to prevent infection. Using a condom can help prevent the spread of HIV, but it is not 100% effective. Sex without a condom is only safe when you and your uninfected partner only have sex with each other.

### FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO AVOID HIV

- Get to know your partner before having sexual contact
- Wear a condom for all types of sexual contact — vaginal, oral or anal



- Never share needles
- Don't do drugs
- Make decisions about having sex when sober. Alcohol and drugs affect your ability to make sound decisions
- Get tested by a doctor or at a medical clinic at least once a year



Medical testing of HIV is the only way to be sure you are not infected. Share your concerns about getting tested with your partner. They will thank you for it.

“OF THE 1.2 MILLION INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH HIV INFECTION IN THE UNITED STATES, AROUND 13% DON'T KNOW THEY ARE INFECTED.”