



HIV and AIDS: The Difference

Human Immunodeficiency Virus is the virus that causes AIDS. Someone is "HIV positive" if he or she has been infected by the virus. An HIV positive person may not seem sick, but can still spread the virus.

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a disease that affects over 20 million people worldwide. When a certain amount of HIV builds up in the body, the person becomes sick with AIDS.

HIV attacks the body's immune system and destroys its ability to fight infections caused by other viruses or bacteria. A person with AIDS develops life-threatening diseases as a result of *opportunistic infections*. These are infections that do not usually make healthy people very sick.

AIDS is not curable, but it is preventable.

How HIV is Transmitted

HIV is most commonly spread by having sex with a person infected by the HIV virus. HIV enters the body when bodily fluids are exchanged. These fluids include blood (even a tiny bit), semen, and vaginal fluids. Abstinence, not having sex, is the best way to protect yourself from sexually transmitted HIV.

Any man or woman of any age can become infected with the HIV virus.

HIV is also spread through contact with infected blood. In the 1980's, people contracted HIV through blood transfusions. Today, all blood products are screened to prevent the transmission of HIV.

Medical Precautions and HIV
www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/precautions

Small amounts of blood remain on a needle or syringe after use, so sharing infected needles or syringes can spread HIV. People who inject drugs have an extremely high risk of contracting HIV.

Women can pass the HIV virus to their babies during pregnancy or birth because the mother and baby share the same fluids.

Mothers can also pass HIV to their babies through their breast milk. Taking the drug AZT during pregnancy greatly decreases the baby's risk of exposure.

The virus is not spread through kissing or sharing food or beverages.



For More Information

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for an extension of this pamphlet. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links. Test your understanding with a quick quiz.



AIDS Information:

Hotline: (800) 342-AIDS

En Español: (800) 344-SIDA

TTY/TDD: (800) 243-7889

International: (301) 217-0023

Don't stay in the dark.
Get In the Know!

in the know

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HIV and AIDS

*better safe
than sorry*



How You Can Become Infected

HIV can infect anyone who practices these risky behaviors:

- Having sexual contact with someone who is HIV positive.
- Sharing used needles or syringes.
- Being pierced or punctured with an infected needle or "sharp" of any kind.



You *cannot* catch HIV by:

- Hugging or kissing an infected person.
- Sharing food or drinks.
- Sharing toilet seats.
- Mosquito or other insect bites.
- Coughing or sneezing.

HIV Transmission

www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/transmission

Signs of HIV Infection

Some people do not develop any symptoms when they first become infected with HIV. An HIV positive person can infect others whether or not he or she has had any symptoms. It is impossible to tell if a person is infected with HIV by looks alone.

Early symptoms of HIV infection may appear within one or two months of the infection. Symptoms of HIV infection, when shown, are flu-like. They include:

- Headaches.
- Fatigue or loss of energy.
- Swollen glands.
- Weight loss.
- Fevers and sweats.
- Skin rashes.
- Short-term memory loss.



AIDS

AIDS is the disease that develops in the late stages of HIV infection. The virus destroys the immune system, and people with AIDS cannot fight off basic infections caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites. People suffering from late-stage AIDS can even die from the common cold!

Common symptoms of AIDS can include:

- Seizures and lack of coordination.
- Persistent diarrhea.
- Vision loss.
- Nausea, cramps, and vomiting.
- Fever.
- Painful swallowing.
- Shortness of breath.
- Weight loss.
- Severe headaches.

In addition, people with AIDS are at risk of developing various types of cancers.



Get Tested

If you have engaged in any risky behaviors, get tested immediately. Only a medical test can reveal HIV infection. Early symptoms do not always appear. HIV tests are always confidential or anonymous.

Now, get tested again!

It can sometimes take between three and six months for HIV to be produced in large enough quantities to be detected in a standard blood test.

If you learn you are HIV positive, you can get medicines to extend your life.

HIV Testing

www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/testing

Is There a Cure?

Researchers have developed medicines to fight HIV and related infections and cancers. Some of these drugs are AZT, ddC, ddI and 3TC. Patients often take several of these drugs at once. Some patients take up to 30 pills a day!

Researchers are trying to create an AIDS vaccine, but remember: There is no cure for HIV. Once you are infected with HIV, you will always have it, and you can spread the disease to others.

medicines to
fight HIV



Keep It Away

Since there is no cure for HIV, the only way to avoid being infected with HIV is by prevention. So, remember:

- Abstinence, or not having sex, is the only sure way of avoiding HIV by sexual contact.
- Injecting illegal drugs spreads HIV and other diseases. Never share needles or syringes. Never recap needles. Place them in a puncture-proof container before throwing away.
- Avoid using drugs or alcohol. Using drugs or alcohol can affect your decisions and lead to bad, unhealthy choices.
- Tattooing and body piercing needles must always be new and never re-used.



Preventing HIV/AIDS

www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/prevent