



### How HIV is Transmitted

HIV is most commonly spread by having sex with a person infected by the HIV virus. HIV enters the body through the vagina, penis, rectum (anus), or mouth when bodily fluids are exchanged during any act of sex. These fluids include blood (even a tiny bit), semen, pre-ejaculate fluids (fluids that come out of the penis before orgasm), and vaginal fluids. Oral sex can be risky because of the body fluids that are involved.

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/med](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/med)

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.



### HIV and AIDS: The Difference

Human Immunodeficiency Virus is the virus that causes AIDS. Someone is "HIV positive" if he or she has been exposed to 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. HIV attacks the body's immune system and destroys its ability to fight infections caused by other viruses or bacteria.

When a certain amount of HIV builds up in the body, the person becomes sick with AIDS. A person with AIDS develops life-threatening diseases as a result of *opportunistic infections*. These are infections that do not usually make healthy people sick.

AIDS is not curable, but it is preventable.

*infection*

### For More Information

Go to [www.intheknowzone.com](http://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!

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# HIV and AIDS

*learn more,  
save your life*



**in the know**

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## How You Can Become Infected

HIV can infect anyone who practices these risky behaviors:

- Having sexual contact with someone who is HIV positive
- Having sex without a latex condom
- 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 bites
- Coughing or sneezing

### HIV Transmission

[www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/trans](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/trans)

## 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:

- Seizure 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/test](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/test)

## 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.

### Treatments for HIV/AIDS

[www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/treat](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/treat)

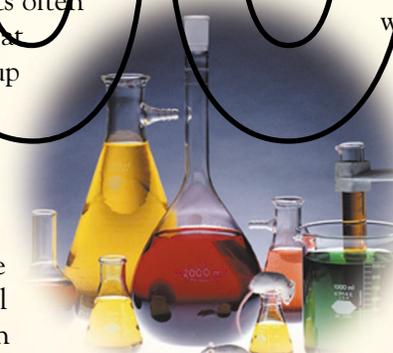
## Keep It Away

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

- The only perfect way to avoid getting HIV is not to have sex, or to have sex with only one uninfected partner.
- 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.
- If you have vaginal, oral, or anal sex, always use a latex condom. Safer sex (with a condom) can save your life.
- Tattooing and body piercing needles must always be new and never re-used.

### Preventing HIV/AIDS

[www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/prev](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/prev)



AIDS

HIV positive

GOODBY