



WHAT EVERYONE
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

HIV and AIDS



Community
Education
Group



Why should I know about HIV and AIDS?

Because your knowledge can help you protect yourself and those you love from HIV. The most important thing you can do for you and your family is to stay healthy and stay alive. This means you should protect yourself from HIV, exercise regularly, eat a nutritious diet, and see your health care provider on a regular basis. After all, your children, family, and friends need you, and you need them. It's important to:

KNOW HOW HIV IS SPREAD

and know how it isn't spread.

LEARN HOW HIV AFFECTS THE BODY

and how treatment can help people with HIV stay healthy longer

GET TESTED

knowing your status can help you to get the best treatment available to you and will help you protect your loved ones.

Your knowledge can also help you treat people who have HIV in an understanding way.

LEARN ABOUT AND GET THE TREATMENT OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO YOU

if you are HIV positive

[Learn more...](#)

What everyone should know about HIV and AIDS

WHAT ARE HIV AND AIDS?*

AIDS is the last stage of an infection caused by HIV, a virus.

HIV WEAKENS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM,

the body's natural defense against illness. Infection with HIV can last for years. There is currently no cure for HIV infection.

AIDS IS THE LAST STAGE OF HIV INFECTION

The immune system is very weak and it can't protect against illness very well. Most people who develop AIDS eventually die from the disease or related conditions.

**HIV stands for the human immunodeficiency virus. AIDS stands for the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.*

The publisher has taken care in the preparation of this booklet, but the information it contains is not intended as a substitute for the expertise and judgment of qualified health-care professionals. You should consult with your health-care provider about all health-care issues.



How is HIV Spread?

HIV is spread through contact with body fluids — mainly blood, semen and vaginal fluids. This contact usually happens:

- During vaginal, anal or oral sex with a person who has HIV
- When sharing a needle or syringe with a person who has HIV — to inject drugs, make tattoos, pierce body parts or for any other reason
- From a mother who has HIV to her baby before birth, during birth or while breastfeeding.

HIV may also be spread through donated blood or blood products. But this is very unlikely now because:

- All donors are carefully screened
- All donors' blood products are tested before being used.

HIV is NOT spread

through the air or through casual activities, such as:

- Sitting next to someone at work, at school, on a bus or elsewhere
- Shaking hands or giving a hug
- Dry or social kissing (NOTE: Kissing can spread other STDs*, such as herpes. Call the CDC National STD and AIDS Hotlines — for more information see the back cover of this pamphlet.)
- Eating in a restaurant or cafeteria
- Using restrooms, water coolers or telephones
- Swimming in a pool or using a hot tub
- Donating blood
- Being bitten by mosquitoes or other insects.

*STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) are also called STIs (sexually transmitted infections).

It's safe to have casual contact with people who have HIV or AIDS!

How HIV affects the body

HIV INVADES THE BODY

Within weeks of being infected most people feel like they have the flu.

THE IMMUNE SYSTEM FIGHTS BACK

For example, it makes special cells and proteins to kill HIV. But it can't kill all the HIV.

THERE MAY BE NO MORE SIGNS OF HIV FOR YEARS

A person with HIV may look healthy during this time. But inside his or her body, HIV is damaging the immune system.

A HEALTHY-LOOKING PERSON CAN SPREAD HIV!

A person with HIV doesn't have to look or feel sick to be able to infect you. The person may go years without even knowing that he or she has the virus.

OTHER SIGNS MAY BEGIN TO SHOW

As HIV infection progresses, people may notice lasting signs, including:

- Swollen lymph glands in the neck, underarm or groin area
- Recurrent fever, including "night sweats"
- Rapid weight loss for no apparent reason
- Constant tiredness
- Diarrhea and decreased appetite
- White spots or unusual blemishes in the mouth
- Flaky skin or rashes
- Oral or vaginal yeast infections that are frequent or hard to treat
- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) that's hard to treat

HIV may also damage the nervous system causing short term memory loss, confusion and other symptoms.

See a health-care provider if you have any of these signs for more than a week. These signs may be caused by other illnesses, but it's important to get a medical opinion.

AIDS is the Last Stage of HIV Infection

PEOPLE MAY NOT DEVELOP AIDS FOR YEARS

Some people with HIV may live without signs of AIDS for 10 years or longer, especially if they're getting treatment. Others may start showing signs of AIDS much sooner.

PEOPLE WITH AIDS GET SICK MORE EASILY

That's because HIV has damaged their immune system. The body is unable to protect itself from illnesses that are usually mild or rare. That is why it is so important to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, in order to protect your immune system from smaller illnesses like a cold, which could be serious if you have AIDS.

SIGNS OF AIDS INCLUDE:

- Certain illnesses and cancers — for example, Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia and Kaposi's sarcoma
- Low levels of special illness-fighting cells in the body.



If you think you could have HIV, get tested as soon as possible.

The results will help you and your health-care provider develop a treatment plan. Be sure to discuss the risks and benefits of any treatment with your health-care provider.

MythBusters

HIV is the same as AIDS.

In fact, HIV is the virus that causes AIDS, and they are very different.

HIV only affects gay men and drug users and black people.

HIV can infect anyone. Babies, women, seniors over 50, teens, Blacks, Whites, Latinos, and Asians. Risky behavior can lead anyone to infection, and most people infected thought it would never happen to them.

We both have HIV, so we don't need to use a condom

Wrong. Partners can re-infect their partners, meaning that they pass more HIV antibodies on to one another, which can make treatment harder as their viral load increases.

People over 50 don't get HIV.

The fact is, anyone can get HIV, no matter how old or young they are.

I am not a carrier for the virus, so I can't infect anyone else.

HIV is not a genetic, recessive, or chronic disease. Once a person is infected, they can pass it on to other people.

I can't get HIV if I'm married.

HIV can infect anyone, and it is important to know your partner's status, no matter how long you have been together.



MythBusters

I can't have children if I have HIV.

This is no longer true. Lots of parents with HIV have healthy children and strong families. It is important for mothers to get screened for HIV during prenatal care, so they can start getting the proper treatments to ensure that their child is not infected before birth, during birth, or during breast feeding.

I have just been diagnosed, I am going to die.

With the current treatments available, people diagnosed with HIV today are living longer than ever, and some don't develop AIDS for years.

The AIDS epidemic began when a human male had sexual intercourse with African monkeys, transmitting the virus to modern humans.

This is a very old myth that just isn't true.

HIV and AIDS can be cured.

Plain and simple, there is **NO CURE FOR HIV OR AIDS.**

We don't need a condom for oral sex, because HIV can't be transmitted through oral sex.

This is a dangerous myth, as condoms should be used consistently and correctly for each new sexual act, including oral, vaginal, and anal.

HIV is transmitted by mosquitoes.

HIV is only transmitted from the exchange of body fluids from person to person, and not insects or animals.

AIDS is transmitted through casual contact or toilet seats.

HIV and AIDS can only be transmitted through blood, semen, vaginal fluid, or breast milk from a mother to a baby.

HIV testing is unreliable

Both oral and blood tests are over 99% accurate.

Sex with a virgin can cure HIV.

This myth is common in some parts of Africa, and it is totally untrue. The myth has resulted in many rapes of young girls and children by HIV+ men, who often infect their victims. Rape won't cure anything — and is a serious crime all around the world.

Magic Johnson had HIV and is cured.

Magic Johnson is not cured, but thanks to modern medicine, any HIV antibodies in his body are extremely hard to detect.

You would have to drink a bucket of infected saliva to become infected yourself.

HIV is found in saliva, but in quantities too small to infect someone. If you drink a bucket of saliva from a positive person, you won't become infected. There has been only one recorded case of HIV transmission via kissing, out of all the many millions of recorded cases. In this case, both partners had extremely badly bleeding gums.

HIV can pass through latex.

Some people have been spreading rumors that the virus is so small that it can pass through 'holes' in latex used to make condoms. This is untrue. Latex blocks HIV, as well as sperm - preventing pregnancy, too.



Prevention

HIV AND AIDS ARE PREVENTABLE!

You can help reduce your risk of HIV infection by knowing the facts and talking to your partner and your health care provider about prevention methods. Here are some things you can do to help prevent spreading and contracting HIV:

- Get tested and know your status
- Know your partner's HIV status
- Be faithful to your partner, and make sure your partner is faithful to you, don't just guess.
- Use a condom correctly with each act of sex, including anal and vaginal sex, with a water-based lubricant.
- Take control by using a female condom, and learn how to use it before the heat of the moment.
- Use a condom or dental dam during oral sex
- When possible, abstain from sexual activity, as this is the only 100% effective method of not contracting or spreading the virus
- Always use clean needles, which should be cleaned with bleach and water
- Avoid sharing needles for any type of drugs, even if they are prescription
- Talk about HIV with your family and friends. There is no shame in being honest and knowledgeable to help protect the ones you love!
- Prenatal care is important for your baby's health, too! If you are pregnant, get screened for HIV and see your health care provider or health clinic regularly so that they can help to get you on the right treatments in order to make sure that your baby is not born infected with HIV, as babies can be infected before birth, during the birthing process, or during breastfeeding. Talk to your doctor about how to prevent transmission of the virus to your baby.

The following activities may put you at a much higher risk for HIV, so be open and honest with your health care provider so they can help you protect yourself. If you are a health care provider or social service provider, talk to your clients about how to best protect themselves, and know how the following factors can increase risk for HIV, and how to identify them.

- Drug use
- Alcohol Use
- Incarceration
- Sex work
- Survival sex
- Punishment
- Multiple sex partners
- Domestic or intimate partner violence or abusive relationships
- Homophobia
- Sexism
- Discrimination
- Race



Protect Yourself from HIV!

KNOW THAT NOT HAVING SEX

IS SAFEST

It's the only sure way to avoid getting HIV infection and other STD's through sex. It's also the only sure way to prevent pregnancy.

DON'T MIX ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS WITH SEX

You'll be more likely to engage in risky behavior if you do.

NEVER SHARE NEEDLES OR SYRINGES

- If you shoot drugs get help to stop
- Until you stop using drugs take steps to reduce your risk. Never share drug equipment. Use a new, sterile needle and syringe every time.

Use a Male Latex Condom if you Decide to Have Sex

Condoms aren't 100% effective. But when used properly, they can help protect you and your partner against HIV infection and other STD's. (Remember, certain STD's can still be spread by contact with infected areas that are not covered by the condom.)

Use a new latex condom properly for each act of vaginal, anal or oral sex. Remember, you can get STD's (including HIV) from anal and oral sex, too.

- Read the label and instructions carefully. They should say the condom helps protect against STD's. Check the expiration date.
- Handle the condom carefully. Don't use damaged or expired condoms.
- Put it on as soon as the penis is hard and before any vaginal, anal or oral contact.
- Gently squeeze out any air from the tip of the condom, leaving space for semen. Unroll it to the base of the penis.
- Use a water-based lubricant, such as K-Y Brand Jelly, for vaginal and anal sex. Don't use latex condoms with products that have oil. These include petroleum jelly, massage oils, body lotions and vaginal products that have oil. The oil can make latex condoms break.
- Pull out right after coming. Hold on to the base of the condom as you do.
- Throw away the used condom. Never reuse condoms.

Store condoms in a cool, dry place away from sunlight.

IF YOU CANNOT USE A MALE LATEX CONDOM,

Consider using a polyurethane condom for women, or polyurethane or synthetic latex condom for men.

These types of condoms have not been as thoroughly tested as male latex condoms. But the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) indicate they're likely to provide similar protection.

HIV Testing is Simple and Reliable

Anyone can get HIV!

You can get HIV if you act in risky ways even once!

If you think you have been exposed to HIV, you are encouraged to get tested. Many testing sites now offer tests that can show results in about 20 minutes! However, HIV may take up to three months to show up in your body, so make sure that you have not exposed yourself to any new risks before getting tested.

IT'S WHAT YOU DO THAT COUNTS

It doesn't matter if you're young, old, male, female, gay, straight or bi-sexual. Certain behaviors increase your risk of getting HIV, no matter who you are.

KNOW YOUR RISK

Consider getting tested for HIV if you (or any sexual partner) have ever:

- had unprotected vaginal, anal or oral sex with a man or a woman
- shared needles or syringes for any reason
- had an STD
- received a blood transfusion or blood clotting factor between 1978 and 1985.

TURN THE PAGE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HIV TESTING.



Consider testing if you're pregnant or thinking about getting pregnant, or if you're unsure of your risks.

FIND AN HIV TESTING SITE

You can call:

- a health-care provider
- your local or state health department
- the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 1-800-CDC-INFO

The site should offer HIV counseling before and after your test. Make sure all your questions are answered.

ASK ABOUT ANONYMOUS TESTING

This means you don't have to give your name. No one but you will know your results. If it's not available, ask who may see your results.

UNDERSTAND HIV TEST RESULTS

The results will help you and your health-care provider develop a treatment plan. Be sure to discuss the risks and benefits of any treatment with your health-care provider.

- "positive" means a person has HIV. It doesn't necessarily mean that he or she has AIDS yet or will get it soon.
- "negative" means the test didn't find signs of HIV. But a person may have to be retested if testing was done soon after a risky behavior. It may take up to 6 months or longer after infection to get a positive result on a test, as HIV antibodies may be undetectable until this time.

About HIV Treatment

Early diagnosis and proper treatment can help people with HIV stay healthy longer. But there's no cure yet. Treatments may be used to help:

FIGHT HIV

- for example, some drugs and drug combinations can help slow down HIV's reproduction.

PREVENT OR FIGHT INFECTIONS, CANCERS AND ILLNESSES that people with AIDS often get.

Treatments may include:

- surgery
- radiation
- drugs

LOWER RISKS DURING PREGNANCY and child-birth. A planned Caesarean birth and/or use of special medication may help prevent transmission of HIV from an infected mother to her child.

NEW TREATMENTS ARE BEING DEVELOPED

Talk to your health-care provider about the latest treatments.





Clinical Trials for HIV and AIDS Vaccines

Although there is no cure or vaccine for HIV or AIDS, scientists and doctors are currently trying to find a vaccine that could help prevent people from getting sick.

SO WHAT IS AN HIV VACCINE?

It is a preventative substance that teaches the body's immune system to recognize and protect itself against HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. HIV vaccines currently being tested in humans are made from man-made materials that CANNOT cause HIV infection.

WHAT IS A CLINICAL TRIAL?

It is a study done to find new and better ways to:

- Keep people from getting sick
- Find out what is wrong with a person's health
- Cure a person of their sickness

WHY SHOULD AFRICAN AMERICANS KNOW ABOUT CLINICAL TRIALS?

- It's important to know about health choices
- Drugs might effect African Americans differently
- More African Americans die from health problems than other groups of people
- To help the community, our families, and our friends

CLINICAL TRIAL RISK

- Patients may get sick from drugs
- May not be helpful
- May require more time:
 - Trips to doctor
 - More treatment
 - Hospital stays
 - Different or complicated drug requirements

CLINICAL TRIAL BENEFITS

- You're more involved in your own health care
- You get new treatments before others
- You get the best medical care from the best hospitals, clinics, and doctors
- You help others by helping doctors find new medicines and treatments for illnesses



Types of Clinical Trials

Prevention Trials

- Look for ways to stop the disease from happening or returning
- includes medicines, vitamins, minerals, or changes in how we live
- a VACCINE is an example

Treatment Trials

- looks for new drugs or treatments to cure an illness

Diagnostic Trials

- looks for better ways to test for an illness

Quality of Life

- looks for better ways to help people who are sick live longer & healthier lives

GET TESTED

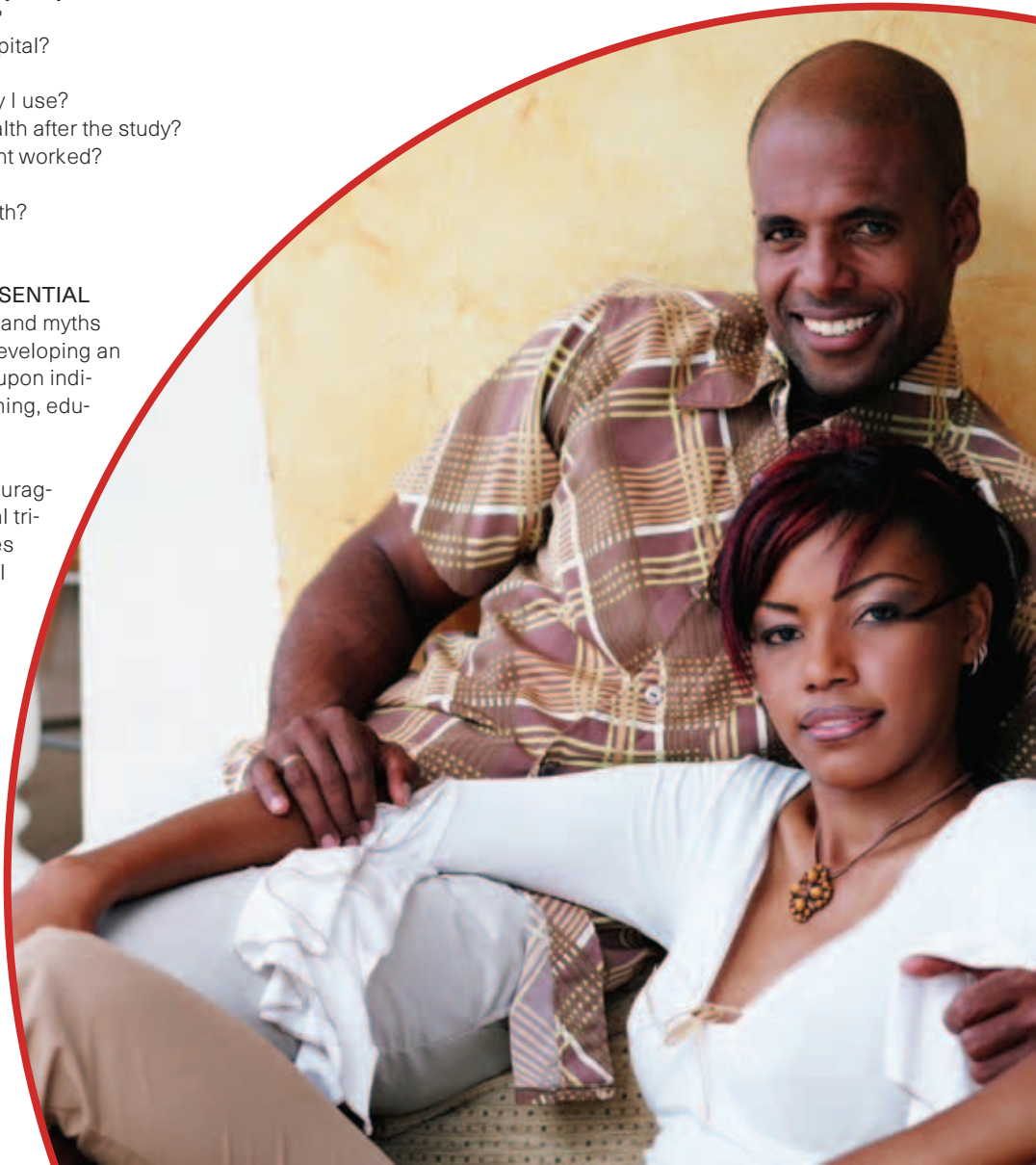
WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN A CLINICAL TRIAL?

- What is the reason for the study?
- Who is going to be in the study?
- Why do researchers/doctors believe the new treatment will work? Has it been tried before?
- What kinds of tests and treatments are involved?
- How does the new treatment compare to old treatments?
- How will the study change my daily life?
- How long will the study last?
- Will I need to stay in the hospital?
- Who will pay for the study?
- Will I be paid back for money I use?
- Who will take care of my health after the study?
- How will I know the treatment worked?
- Will I be told the results?
- Who will take care of my health?

COMMUNITY SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL

in efforts to break down stigma and myths about HIV vaccine research. Developing an effective HIV vaccine depends upon individuals and communities informing, educating and supporting others

By raising awareness and encouraging study participation in clinical trials, individuals and communities can contribute to the successful development of HIV vaccines



GET TESTED

For more Information

about HIV and AIDS, where to find testing, prevention and treatment information, please contact one of the following toll-free hotlines:

NATIONAL AIDS HOTLINE

1-800-CDC-INFO

(for more information)

NATIONAL PREVENTION INFORMATION NETWORK

1-800-458-5231

(for prevention information)

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

1-800-TRIALS-A

(for clinical trial information)

AIDSinfo

1-800-HIV-0440

(for more treatment options)

HIV/AIDS NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

1-800-362-0071

(for HIV/AIDS resources and information)

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