



HIV / AIDS

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. AIDS is acquired immune deficiency syndrome. It is caused by HIV. The virus destroys the body's immune system. This leaves a person unable to fight off diseases. The virus also attacks the central nervous system causing mental problems.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Many people have no symptoms when first infected with HIV. The only way to know if a person has HIV is to get tested. Within a month or two, some people have flu-like symptoms. These symptoms usually go away within a week to a month. They are often mistaken for other infections.

In adults, if left untreated, HIV most often turns into AIDS in about 8 to 10 years. In children born with HIV, symptoms appear within 2 years.

Symptoms of HIV

- Swollen glands. Sore throat.
- Fatigue. Weight loss.
- Fever and sweating that occur often. Chills. Muscle aches.
- Skin rashes that persist. Flaky skin. Mouth ulcers.
- Infections. These include herpes, shingles, and yeast infection.
- Short-term memory loss
- Getting sick often. Slow growth in children.

AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV. With AIDS, a low level of cells in the blood called CD4 T cells occurs. Persons with AIDS get many illnesses. These include skin infections, pneumonia, and cancer.

Symptoms of AIDS

- Extreme fatigue. Weight loss.
- Severe and chronic diarrhea.
- Fever. Severe headaches.
- Swollen lymph glands
- Constant white spots or lesions on the tongue or in the mouth
- Skin rashes and bumps
- Shortness of breath. Coughing. A hard time swallowing.
- Abdominal cramps. Nausea. Vomiting.
- Lack of coordination. Vision loss.
- Mental status changes. Seizures. Coma.



CAUSES

HIV is spread when body fluids, such as semen, rectal and vaginal fluids, and blood, pass from an infected person to another. This includes having unprotected sexual contact and/or sharing drug needles.

Infected females can give HIV to their babies during pregnancy, birth, or breast-feeding. The risk of the baby getting HIV is lowered a great deal if the female takes antiviral medicines during the pregnancy and delivery. HIV is not spread from donating blood, touching, hugging, or kissing a person with HIV. A cough, a sneeze, tears, sweat, or using a hot tub, or public restroom does not spread HIV either.

TREATMENT

A rapid oral HIV test and blood tests detect HIV. There is no cure for AIDS, but antiretroviral therapy (ART) has greatly reduced deaths from AIDS. HIV treatment can reduce the viral load to make it undetectable. This also means HIV can not be transmitted to others through sex, and lowers transmission risk through sharing drug needles. Without HIV treatment, people with AIDS typically survive about three years.



TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Have you tested positive for HIV?

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



Do you have any of these conditions?

- A sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Persistent yeast infections in the mouth (thrush) or vagina.
- Unprotected sex with a current or past sexual partner that has HIV.

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



Do you do high risk activities for getting infected with HIV listed on this page? Or, do you want to get tested for HIV for “peace of mind”?

NO
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YES ➔ **SEE DOCTOR OR Health Department for HIV Testing**



USE SELF-CARE



SELF-CARE / PREVENTION

- Take pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) medications as advised.
- Take steps to reduce the risk of getting infections and diseases. Get enough rest. Eat healthy foods.
- Get emotional support. Join a support group for persons infected with HIV. Let your family and friends know how they can help you.

Reduce the Risk for HIV

- Follow safer sex practices, including using condoms the right way every time you have sex.
- Don't have sex with people who are at high risk for HIV:
 - Persons with multiple sex partners or who inject illegal drugs
 - Partners of persons infected or exposed to HIV
 - Persons who have had multiple blood transfusions, especially before 1985, unless tested negative for HIV
- Don't share needles with anyone. Don't have sex with people who use or have injected illegal drugs.