



HIV & AIDS – how much do you know?

When HIV and AIDS were first discovered, they were commonly thought to be one in the same. Nearly everyone who had HIV would eventually get AIDS. Today, there are special medicines called antiretroviral therapy (ART) that can help keep HIV from progressing to AIDS.

HIV: WHAT IT IS & HOW IT'S TREATED

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. HIV is spread by coming into direct contact with certain body fluids from a person with HIV who has a detectable load of the virus in their body. Most commonly, it is spread by having vaginal or anal sex or sharing injection drug equipment.

HIV attacks the body's immune system, destroying the body's CD4 lymphocyte cells that fight off infections. There is no cure for HIV, but there is treatment.

Early treatment with ART is important. Someone who begins HIV treatment in the early stages of the infection can live long and healthy lives and protect their partners.

More than 150,000 people have HIV and don't know it. This means they aren't getting the treatment they need to live longer and they can spread HIV to others.

HIV is NOT spread through:

- Hugging or casual kissing
- The air, such as sneezing or coughing
- Mosquito or other insect bites



SYMPTOMS OF HIV

Within 2 to 4 weeks of getting HIV, a person may feel like they have a bad case of the flu. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Swollen glands
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Rash

These symptoms may last a few days or several weeks. Some people do not feel sick at all after getting HIV. That's why it's important to get tested if you think you may have been exposed. To find an HIV testing site near you, go to locator.hiv.gov.

AIDS

If HIV progresses to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or AIDS, the body's immune system is badly damaged. A person with AIDS may get sick often, and may get infections and cancers because the body cannot fight them off.

Starting treatment at this late stage can still be helpful to someone with

AIDS. But, it is much better to begin treatment as soon as possible after getting HIV.

