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**HIV/AIDS  
PREVENTION &  
INFORMATION  
GUIDE**



**HIV** stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV attacks and destroys a system's CD4 cells. CD4 cells are an essential part of the body's immune system and without them a person cannot fight off other diseases and infections.

**AIDS**, which stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Deficiency Syndrome, is the final, most advanced stage of the HIV infection.

## You can become infected with HIV in two main ways:



Having sexual intercourse—vaginal, anal, or oral—with an infected person.



Sharing needles or syringes with an infected person.

In addition, women infected with HIV can pass the virus to their babies during pregnancy, birth, or when breastfeeding. Some people have been infected via tainted blood transfusions, especially before 1985 when there was less careful screening and laboratory testing of the blood donations. You cannot be infected by giving blood at a blood bank.

### How Do You Get HIV From Sexual Intercourse?

**HIV is spread via blood, semen, pre-seminal fluids, rectal fluids, and vaginal fluids. Any exchange of these fluids with someone infected with HIV risks infection.** HIV enters the body through cuts or sores—some so small you don't know they're there—on tissue in the vagina, penis, or rectum, and possibly the mouth. Many infected people initially show no symptoms of HIV infection. The more sex partners you have, the greater your chances of encountering someone infected with HIV. Always talk to your partner about HIV and STDs and get tested regularly yourself. Always use a condom unless you and your partner have both been tested, are HIV and STD free, are monogamous, and have made the mutual decision to not use condoms. The pill, the IUD, and other forms of birth control do not prevent the spread of HIV.

### How Do You Get HIV From Using Needles?

Sharing needles or syringes, even once, is an easy way to be infected with HIV and other germs. **Blood from an infected person can remain in or on a needle or syringe and then be transferred directly into the next person who uses it.** If you plan to have your ears pierced or get a tattoo, make sure you go to a qualified technician who uses sterile equipment.

## You can't simply "catch" HIV

- HIV is not spread by coughs, sneezes, sweat, or tears.
- You won't get HIV through everyday contact with infected people at school, work, home, or anywhere else.
- You won't get HIV from clothes, phones, or toilet seats.
- It can't be passed on by things like spoons, cups, or other objects that someone who is infected with the virus has used.
- You cannot get it from everyday contact with an infected person.
- You won't get AIDS from a mosquito bite. The AIDS virus does not live in a mosquito, and it is not transmitted through a mosquito's salivary glands like other diseases such as malaria or yellow fever.
- You won't get it from bed bugs, lice, flies, or other insects.



**Fact:** Experts are not completely certain about HIV transmission through deep, prolonged, or "French" kissing. While scientists believe it is remotely possible, there has never been a known case of HIV transfusion, through kissing. Most scientists agree that transmission of HIV through deep or prolonged kissing may be possible, but would be extremely unlikely.

## Think carefully about their knowledge and experience.

- How old are the children?
- How much do they already know about HIV infection, AIDS, and other related subjects, such as sex and drug use?
- Where have they gotten their information in the past? Is it likely to be accurate information?
- Is it possible that the young people you will be talking with are already sexually active?
- Have they maybe already tried drugs? Do they spend time with people who do these things?
- In addition, consider any religious and cultural values. Do you want to convey these in the conversation? How will you get them across?

When talking with a young person about HIV infection and AIDS, **think of your role as that of counselor, advisor, coach, or guide.** Your goal is to provide accurate and complete information to help a young person make smart decisions about their health and avoiding the spread of HIV. Don't try to scare them with misinformation or guilt them about having sex. Empower them to take control of their health. Encourage them to respect their bodies and their interactions with other people.



**Fact:** In the U.S. the average age for first time sexual intercourse is between 15 and 16. It is estimated that 3 million teens are infected with sexually transmitted diseases (venereal diseases–VD) each year. 60 percent of all American high school seniors have used illegal drugs. Without proper education, young people are at risk for contracting HIV.

**Have A Mutual Conversation.** A conversation is an exchange of ideas and information, not a lecture.

- Encourage the young person with whom you speak to talk and ask questions.
- Ask about his or her thoughts, feelings, and activities.
- **Listen to the young person with whom you speak as closely as you hope he or she will listen to you.**
- Stop talking if he or she wants to speak.
- Give him or her your full attention, and make eye contact.
- Try to show a positive attitude as you lead the discussion. A critical, disapproving tone can prompt a young person to ignore you.
- Don't Get Discouraged.
- Encourage the young person to check your information with another source, such as the CDC National AIDS Hotline (1-800-342-AIDS).
- If your first conversation is cut short for any reason, don't give up. It is important to try again.

## **Tips For Starting A Conversation**

- Find a calm, private place where you and the person feel comfortable.
- If you find it awkward to bring the topic up, you can look for cues that will help you like referencing stories in the media or popular culture (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, movies). Start a conversation by commenting on one of them or asking a young person how he or she feels about it.

## Check out these resources to learn more about HIV and AIDS

- **Aidsmap.** Share HIV and AIDS related information, including American and European testing centers, and provides an online community of support and resources. Go to <http://www.aidsmap.com/resources>.
- **The National Library of Medicine.** (NLM), the world's largest medical library, has been developing AIDS information services since the AIDS crisis began in 1980. Go to <https://sis.nlm.nih.gov> for more information.
- **AIDSinfo.** Learn about Federally approved HIV/AIDS medical practice guidelines, HIV treatment and prevention clinical trials, and other research information at [aidsinfo.nih.gov](http://aidsinfo.nih.gov) and [infosida.nih.gov](http://infosida.nih.gov).
- **Multicultural Resources.** Culturally and linguistically appropriate health information and resources for diverse communities at [sis.nlm.nih.gov/outreach/multicultural.html](http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/outreach/multicultural.html)
- **The CDC.** Provides leadership for *HIV* prevention research, information on the virus, its origins, symptoms, and testing, and other resources at <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/>.
- **AIDS/HIV Nightline:** 1-800-628-9240 or 415-434-AIDS
- **Hemophilia AIDS Network/ National Hemophilia Foundation:** 1-800-424-2634; international: 1-212-328-3700. Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm (Eastern Time, English and Spanish).
- **The WHO.** Provides information about the global effect of HIV and AIDS. Go to <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/communicable-diseases/hivaids>.



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[info@medinaction.com](mailto:info@medinaction.com) | [www.medinaction.com](http://www.medinaction.com)