

HIV/AIDS

1. What is HIV/AIDS?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If left untreated, it can lead to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). There is no cure for HIV, but it is treatable with medication. If someone receives the right treatment, HIV can be controlled and people can live long, healthy lives.

2. How is HIV spread?

HIV can be spread via 5 body fluids: blood, semen or pre-cum, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. You can get HIV by having unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has HIV. You can also get HIV by sharing needles, syringes, or other drug injection equipment. Pregnant people can also spread HIV to their baby during pregnancy or birth.

You cannot get HIV from a person by hugging, kissing, sharing food or drinks with someone who has HIV.

3. What are the symptoms of HIV?

Sometimes symptoms may not develop or they could be confused with another illness. If symptoms develop, they can be flu-like and show up about 2 to 4 weeks after exposure. Symptoms can last a few days or several weeks and the most common symptoms include fever, swollen lymph nodes, sore throat, rash, chills, night sweats, fatigue, and body aches.

4. How can I get tested?

If you have these symptoms or think you may have been exposed to HIV, get tested. Anyone 12 years and older can get tested for HIV. You can visit gettested.cdc.gov to find free or low cost, confidential testing sites available around Los Angeles County. You can also visit takemehome.org to get a free HIV test kit mailed to you.

5. How is HIV treated?

HIV is treated with medicine prescribed by your doctor. Get treatment as soon as possible to lower the amount of HIV in your body (viral load). When your viral load is low enough, it cannot be found (undetectable) on an HIV test and you will not be able to spread it to others during sex (untransmittable). This is known as Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U).

6. How can I prevent HIV?

- Use a condom or dental dam every time you have sex.
- Limit your sex partners.
- Don't share needles, syringes, or other injection equipment.
- Talk to your doctor about PrEP* and PEP*.
- If you are pregnant, seek early prenatal care to prevent health problems for you and your baby.



Key Points

- HIV is spread via sex, sharing needles, and through pregnancy or birth.
- There is no cure, but it is treatable.
- Get tested, use condoms, don't share needles.
- Talk to your doctor about PrEP.

For more information:

**Los Angeles County
Department of Public
Health**

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/

**California Department of
Public Health**

www.cdph.ca.gov/hiv

**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
(CDC)**

www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/index.html

***For more information on PrEP or PEP, please see "PrEP FAQ" or "PEP FAQ".**

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