

December 2024

HIV AND AIDS AWARENESS

What is HIV?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks cells that help the body fight infection, making a person more vulnerable to other infections and diseases. It is spread by contact with bodily fluids of someone who has HIV. Common ways of spreading HIV is through unprotected sex (sex without a condom), contact with blood (such as sharing syringes, needles or other drug equipment), or spread by a person with untreated HIV to spread the virus to a child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding.



There is no cure for HIV. However, there is medication, antiretroviral therapy (ART), that can reduce the amount of HIV in the blood (also known as viral load), to a very low level. People with HIV who take HIV medicine (ART) as prescribed, and obtain an undetectable viral load, can live long and healthy lives. If HIV is left untreated, it can lead to AIDS.

What is AIDS?

AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) is the late stage of HIV infection that occurs when the body's immune system is badly damaged because of the virus. Untreated HIV most often turns into AIDS in about 8 to 10 years.

People with AIDS are more likely to develop diseases they wouldn't get if they had healthy immune systems, also known as opportunistic infections. Without HIV medicine, people with AIDS typically survive about 3 years. Once someone has a dangerous opportunistic illness, life expectancy without treatment falls to about 1 year. The sooner people start treatment for HIV, the better chances they have for survival.

Facts:

- HIV can impact anyone, however it disproportionately impacts gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) population
- Approximately 1.2 million people in the U.S. have HIV and about 13% of those aren't aware they need to be tested
- In 2022, approximately 31,800 people acquired HIV
- MSM account for 67% of those newly acquired with HIV. Overall, 87% of HIV infections are among males

Preventing HIV:

- Choose not to have sex (staying abstinent)
- Choose sexual activities that lower your chances of HIV transmission
- You can't get HIV from sexual activities that don't involve contact with semen, vaginal fluid, or blood
 - Use condoms every time
 - Take PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), a medication to prevent getting HIV
 - Don't inject drugs; never share needles, syringes, or other drug injection equipment
- If you think you have been exposed to HIV in the last 72 hours, talk to a health care professional to see if you are qualified to take PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis)
- If you are pregnant, get tested for HIV to avoid transmitting HIV to your baby



Self-test:

[Get Tested | CDC NPIN](#)

HIVE Testing and Care Services Locator:

[HIV Testing Sites & Care Services Locator](#)

Resources:

[HIV/AIDS - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic](#)

[HIV Prevention | Let's Stop HIV Together | CDC](#)

[U.S. Statistics | HIV.gov](#)

[What Are HIV and AIDS? | HIV.gov](#)