

HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) & ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)

WHAT IS HIV & AIDS?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. When left untreated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

2 - 4+ weeks

Acute Infection:

2 to 4 weeks after infection, individuals may experience flu-like symptoms which can include swollen lymph nodes, and mouth ulcers. These symptoms may last up to several weeks. Some infected individuals do not have any symptoms at all.

Chronic Infection:

At this stage, the body's immune response naturally stabilizes the viral level. At this point, the virus reproduces at much lower levels causing many individuals to not have any symptoms. Depending on one's body, this stage can last up to 15 years. HIV is still transmittable during this stage. • Without medical care, the body will eventually no longer be able to maintain stable viral loads and the infection will progress to the next stage.

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS):

At this stage, the immune system is compromised, and individuals are vulnerable to infections or diseases known as opportunistic infections. Without treatment, people with AIDS typically survive about three years.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

HIV can be spread through blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk. Sexually transmitted infection occurs through anal or vaginal sex, however, the risk of contracting HIV through oral sex is not zero. Transmission can occur between a pregnant woman and their child or via sharing needles for drug injection.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

Without treatment, HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) can make a person very sick and even cause death. Ask a healthcare provider about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) right away if you have been exposed to HIV, PEP is an anti-HIV medication to prevent HIV but the prescription must be taken within 3 days. There is no current cure for HIV/AIDS but anti-retroviral therapy (ART) can reduce the escalation of symptoms and related complications.



PREVENTION

If you are at risk for HIV, ask your health care provider if pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is right for you as a preventative measure. Avoid unprotected sexual activities that may put you at risk. Use a condom correctly every time you have vaginal or anal sex and use a dental dam during oral sex. Regularly get tested and treated for STDs to avoid delayed treatment or further transmission.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION
Visit the CDC here: [HIV & AIDS - CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/)

This fact sheet is for information purposes and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care professional.