

For more information:

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Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/std

CDC-INFO Contact Center
1-800-CDC-INFO
1-800-232-4636
cdcinfo@cdc.gov

If you have been diagnosed with any sexually transmitted disease (STD), your sexual partner(s) should be tested for HIV and other STDs, even if they have no symptoms. If you have been diagnosed with any STD, including HIV, you should have a blood test in three months to detect blood-borne infections you might have contracted at the time you tested positive for any STD.

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HIV/AIDS

Facts & Info

What is HIV?

HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). The virus may be passed from one person to another through blood, rectal fluid, semen, vaginal secretions, or breast milk.



How do you get HIV?

- Having unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex (sex without a condom or dental dam) with someone who has HIV, or
- Sharing needles or “works” used to inject drugs with someone who has HIV, or
- A mother living with HIV can pass it to her baby before, during, or after childbirth, or
- From a blood transfusion (It is unlikely to get HIV this way, because all blood donated in the United States has been tested for HIV since 1985.)

Can HIV be prevented?

Abstinence is the only 100% method of not contracting HIV. However, limiting the number of sexual partners, never sharing needles, and using condoms the right way every time you have sex can reduce your risk of getting HIV.

There are now options that allow you to take medicines, such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), if you are at increased risk.

How is HIV diagnosed?

HIV can be diagnosed using blood or oral fluids..

How do I know if I have HIV?

The only way to know for sure if you have HIV is to get tested. Knowing your status is important, because it helps you make healthy decisions to prevent getting HIV or transmitting HIV to others.

How is HIV treated?

There is no cure for HIV, but anti-retroviral medications are effective in fighting HIV and its complications. Treatments are designed to reduce HIV in the body, keep the immune system as healthy as possible, and decrease complications that may develop.

What are the symptoms of HIV?

Some people may experience flu-like illness within 2 to 4 weeks after getting HIV. Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Rash
- Night sweats
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Tiredness/fatigue
- Swollen lymph

How do I get an HIV test?

HIV tests can use blood or saliva to detect HIV. Some tests take a few days or weeks for results, but rapid HIV screening tests can give results in about 20 minutes. All positive screening HIV tests must be followed up by a blood test to confirm the positive result.

Visit www.gettested.org to find a testing location near you, or dial 211 for information on testing locations.

Who should get an HIV test?

About 1 in 7 people in the United States who have HIV do not know they have it. The CDC recommends everyone between the ages of 13-65 years get tested for HIV at least once, as a part of routine health care. Others at higher risk of getting HIV should get tested every three to six months, or at least once each year.

If you are pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about getting tested for HIV and other ways to protect your child from getting HIV.

If you have these symptoms, that doesn't mean you have HIV. Each of these symptoms can be caused by other illnesses. If you have these symptoms after a potential exposure to HIV, see a health care provider and tell them about your risk. The only way to determine whether you have HIV is to be tested.