



AIDS/HIV INFECTION

WHAT IS HIV/AIDS?

HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) IS A VIRUS. THE TERMS "HIV POSITIVE," "HIV INFECTION," OR "HAS HIV DISEASE," ALL MEAN THAT THE PERSON HAS HIV IN HIS OR HER BODY AND CAN PASS THE VIRUS TO OTHER PEOPLE. HIV ATTACKS THE BODY'S IMMUNE SYSTEM. OVER TIME, MOST PEOPLE INFECTED WITH HIV BECOME LESS ABLE TO FIGHT OFF THE COMMON GERMS THAT DO NOT USUALLY MAKE A HEALTHY PERSON SICK, BUT CAN CAUSE LIFE-THREATENING INFECTIONS AND CANCERS IN A PERSON WHOSE IMMUNE SYSTEM HAS BEEN WEAKENED BY HIV. ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS) IS A LATE STAGE OF HIV DISEASE. THERE ARE MEDICATIONS THAT HAVE HELPED PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV OR AIDS LIVE LONGER, HEALTHIER LIVES. SOME PEOPLE HAVE LIVED FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS AND HAVE TAKEN MEDICINES FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO CURE.

WHO GETS HIV/AIDS?

ANYONE CAN GET HIV BUT THOSE WHO HAVE AN INCREASED RISK ARE DRUG USERS, PEOPLE WHO HAVE UNPROTECTED SEX, HAVE HEPATITIS, TUBERCULOSIS, OR A SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE, OR HAVE RECEIVED BLOOD PRODUCTS BEFORE 1985.

HOW IS HIV/AIDS SPREAD?

HIV SPREADS WHEN INFECTED BLOOD, BODY FLUIDS, OR BREAST MILK GET INTO THE BLOODSTREAM OF ANOTHER PERSON THROUGH NEEDLES, A BREAK IN THE SKIN, MUCOUS LININGS, OR SEX. WOMEN WITH HIV INFECTION CAN PASS HIV TO THEIR BABIES DURING PREGNANCY, DELIVERY, AND BREASTFEEDING. HIV IS **not** SPREAD THROUGH SALIVA (SPIT) OR BY CASUAL CONTACT LIKE SNEEZING, COUGHING, EATING OR DRINKING FROM COMMON UTENSILS, SHAKING HANDS, HUGGING, OR USE OF RESTROOMS AND DRINKING FOUNTAINS.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HIV/AIDS?

THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE HIV IS TO BE TESTED. SYMPTOMS OR WARNING SIGNS OF ADVANCED HIV INFECTION INCLUDE RAPID WEIGHT LOSS, RECURRING FEVER AND NIGHT SWEATS, UNEXPLAINED TIREDNESS, ENLARGED LYMPH GLANDS IN THE ARMPITS, GROIN, OR NECK, DIARRHEA OR PNEUMONIA, COLORED BLOTCHES OR BLEMISHES UNDER THE SKIN, IN THE MOUTH, OR ON THE FACE, AND MEMORY LOSS, DEPRESSION, AND OTHER NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS.

HOW IS HIV/AIDS TREATED?

HIV IS TREATED WITH A COMBINATION OF MEDICATIONS THAT SLOW THE BODY FROM DEVELOPING AIDS. TO BE EFFECTIVE, THE TREATMENTS MUST BE TAKEN ON A SCHEDULE AND NO TREATMENT HAS BEEN FOUND TO COMPLETELY REMOVE THE VIRUS FROM THE BODY.

HOW IS HIV/AIDS PREVENTED?

TO PREVENT HIV DO NOT: HAVE UNPROTECTED SEX, USE DRUGS THAT NEED TO BE INJECTED, OR TRANSFER UNSECURE BLOOD.