



### What is HIV?

HIV is the human immunodeficiency virus. It is the virus that can lead to AIDS. HIV damages a person's body by destroying specific blood cells, called CD4+ T cells, which are crucial to helping the body fight diseases.

### How is HIV transmitted?

HIV is transmitted in blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. The most common ways HIV is spread are by:

- ▶ Having vaginal or anal intercourse without a condom with someone who has HIV/AIDS
- ▶ Unprotected oral sex can also be a risk for HIV transmission, but it is a much lower risk than anal or vaginal sex
- ▶ Sharing needles or syringes with someone who has HIV/AIDS
- ▶ Getting HIV-infected blood, semen, or vaginal secretions into open wounds or sores
- ▶ Being born to an infected mother

HIV cannot reproduce outside the human body. It is not spread by:

- ▶ Air or water
- ▶ Insects, including mosquitoes. Studies conducted by CDC researchers and others have shown no evidence of HIV transmission from insects
- ▶ Saliva, tears, or sweat. There is no documented case of HIV being transmitted by spitting
- ▶ Casual contact like shaking hands or sharing dishes
- ▶ Closed-mouth kissing

### What is the treatment for HIV or AIDS?

- ▶ If you test positive, the first thing you need to do is breathe. Even though there is no cure for HIV, it can be managed. That means that with proper treatment, you can live a productive life. However, you have to take responsibility for managing your health and protecting your partners
- ▶ Antiretroviral medicines. Because HIV is a certain type of virus called a retrovirus, the drugs used to treat it are called antiretroviral medicines. These powerful medicines control the virus and slow progression of HIV infection, but they do not cure it. You need to take these medicines exactly as your doctor prescribes.
- ▶ HAART. The current recommended treatment for HIV is a combination of three or more medicines. This regimen of medicines is called highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART).

### Want to know if you're at risk?

Head to **THE CHECK** to see how important it is for you to get tested: <http://www.hivtest.org>

### Want to know more?

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/stds-hiv-safer-sex/hiv-aids-4264.htm>

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/stds-hiv-safer-sex/hiv-testing-19857.htm>

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/stds-hiv-safer-sex/safer-sex-4263.htm>

### Need to talk?

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636 / 1-888-232-6348 TTY)

Counselors available to answer questions about personal health issues, including HIV/AIDS.