

## Risky sexual behaviour

The main cause of HIV/AIDS spread is risky sexual behaviour. Sex with many partners without use of condom is risky sexual behaviour. It is not only due to having sex with many but also because many people stay away from homes and families for long periods of time, e.g. truck drivers.

Women are more affected by HIV/AIDS in India as this is directly related to her economic and social status and gender inequalities. The existing social and gender norms have great impact on sexual activity and risk behaviour of men and women, which affect women more than men. Women also find it difficult to motivate their partners to use condoms or approach services for treatment of infections.

In our country more than 85 percent of HIV transmissions take place through the sexual route. There are no "high risk groups" but there are some people who have high-risk behaviour. HIV/AIDS can strike anybody depending on your behaviour.

## The window period

After exposure to risky situations, HIV test will be positive only after 6-12 weeks. This is the window period. So one has to wait for this period to get an HIV test done.

## AIDS is the disease

AIDS may occur many years after getting HIV positive, but the person is infected during this period. AIDS is a serious disease without permanent cure, though we have some medicines to reduce its severity. Suggestive symptoms of AIDS:

- Continuous weight loss.
- Persisting diarrhoea.
- Repeated fever or illness lasting more than one month.
- The minor features include chronic cough, itching, rash on body and genitals, oral thrush (fungal infection), bubos, and illnesses coming too often.

There is stigma associated with AIDS and often women suffering from AIDS have been abandoned by their families. We can help in removing stigma about AIDS. We can also help the patients to get in touch with support network for HIV positive people.