

Civic Education – SS1 First Term

Week 4: HIV/AIDS I – Meaning, Causes, and Symptoms

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Define HIV and AIDS clearly.
 2. Distinguish between HIV and AIDS.
 3. Identify and explain the various causes and modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS.
 4. List and describe common symptoms of HIV and AIDS.
 5. Understand the myths and misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS.
-

Introduction: Why This Lesson Is Important

HIV/AIDS has affected millions of lives across the world, including Nigeria. As young people, it is important to understand what HIV and AIDS are, how they are spread, and how they can be prevented. This knowledge will help students make healthy decisions and avoid risky behaviors.

1. Meaning of HIV and AIDS

What is HIV?

HIV stands for **Human Immunodeficiency Virus**.

- It is a virus that attacks and weakens the immune system.
- The **immune system** is the body's defense against sickness.
- When someone is infected with HIV, the virus slowly destroys their white blood cells, making them more vulnerable to infections.

What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**.

- It is the final stage of HIV infection.
- At this stage, the person's immune system is badly damaged and can no longer fight off diseases.

- A person with AIDS suffers from many serious illnesses, which may eventually lead to death if not managed.



Difference Between HIV and AIDS

Aspect	HIV	AIDS
Meaning	A virus that infects and weakens the immune system	A condition that develops when HIV severely damages the immune system
Stage	Early stage	Final and most severe stage
Can be treated?	Yes, HIV can be managed with drugs	AIDS is harder to treat but manageable
Cure	No known cure yet	No cure, but symptoms can be managed



2. Causes of HIV/AIDS

HIV is **not caused by curses, evil spirits, or punishment**. It is caused by a **virus** that is passed from one person to another in specific ways.



Major Ways HIV is Spread (Modes of Transmission):

1. **Unprotected Sexual Intercourse**
 - Having sex without using a condom with someone who is HIV-positive.
 - This is the most common method of transmission.
2. **Sharing Sharp Objects**
 - Using blades, razors, needles, clippers, or tattoo instruments that were used by someone who has HIV without sterilizing them.
 - Barbing salons, traditional birth attendants, and home use can be risky.
3. **Blood Transfusion**
 - Receiving blood from an HIV-positive person when the blood is not properly screened.
4. **From Mother to Child**
 - A pregnant woman with HIV can pass the virus to her baby:
 - During pregnancy
 - During childbirth
 - Through breastfeeding
5. **Use of Unsterilized Medical Instruments**
 - Injections or surgeries done with instruments that are not properly cleaned.



HIV is NOT spread by:

- Hugging or shaking hands
- Sharing food or drinking cups

- Using the same toilet with an infected person
 - Mosquito bites
 - Sitting near someone with HIV
 - Playing with someone who has HIV
-



3. Symptoms of HIV/AIDS



Symptoms of HIV (Early Stage – may take weeks/months/years to show)

Many people with HIV do **not show any symptoms at first**. But as the virus gets stronger in the body, some early signs may include:

- Constant tiredness or weakness
- Fever or night sweats
- Headaches and sore throat
- Loss of appetite or weight loss
- Swollen glands in the neck or armpit
- Skin rashes
- Diarrhea
- Frequent sickness like malaria or flu

Note: These symptoms are **similar to malaria** or other common illnesses, so many people do not know they are infected unless they go for a test.



Symptoms of AIDS (Advanced Stage)

When HIV is not treated and has fully destroyed the immune system, the person develops **AIDS**. Signs of AIDS include:

- Severe weight loss (becoming very thin)
- Constant high fever
- Frequent coughing or tuberculosis (TB)
- Persistent diarrhea (for over a month)
- Sores or white patches in the mouth
- Memory loss or confusion
- Pneumonia and skin diseases
- Frequent infections that don't heal easily

At this stage, the body can no longer protect itself from even minor diseases.



Real-Life Examples and Scenarios

- **Scenario 1:** A girl who looks very healthy and plays actively in class may be HIV-positive. The virus may be in her body for years before symptoms appear.
 - **Scenario 2:** A boy who visits a roadside barber and uses the same blade someone else used could become infected if the blade was not sterilized.
 - **Scenario 3:** A baby born to an HIV-positive mother who was not treated may be born with the virus.
-

Myths and Misconceptions

Myth	Truth
HIV can be transmitted through mosquito bites	✗ False. HIV is not spread by insects.
HIV is a curse or punishment from God	✗ False. HIV is a virus, not a curse.
All HIV-positive people die quickly	✗ False. With early treatment, many live long and healthy lives.
You can get HIV from a toilet seat	✗ False. You cannot.