

# HIV

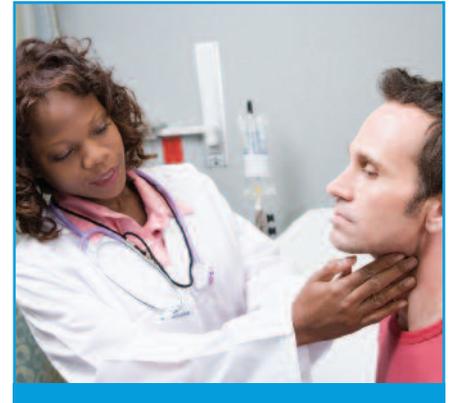


## What Is HIV?

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a virus that makes it hard for your body to fight infections. When the immune system becomes badly damaged, HIV develops into acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). There is no cure for HIV or AIDS, but treatment is available.

HIV is spread through bodily fluids such as blood, semen, and breast milk. HIV can be spread:

- By having anal or vaginal sex with someone who has HIV without using a condom
- By sharing needles with someone who has HIV
- By being stuck by a needle or sharp object contaminated with HIV
- From mother to child during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding



## What Are the Warning Signs of HIV?

Early symptoms of HIV may be mild. It is possible you may not even notice them. Symptoms may include:

- Sore throat
- Swollen glands in the neck, armpits, and groin
- Fever
- Skin rash

In women, early symptoms can include:

- Yeast infections that keep coming back
- Abnormal Pap test or cervical cancer
- Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)

After early symptoms go away, HIV may not cause any symptoms again for many years. Symptoms come again if HIV develops into AIDS. They may include:

- Rapid weight loss
- Fever or soaking night sweats
- Feeling extremely tired for no reason
- Diarrhea that lasts for more than a week
- Skin rashes or lesions inside the mouth, nose, or eyelids



## How Is HIV Diagnosed?

HIV can be diagnosed through blood or saliva tests. Most tests can show if you have been exposed to HIV within the past 2 weeks.



## How Is HIV Treated?

There is no cure for HIV, but there are medicines that can help you control the virus and live a healthy and normal life. These medicines can also help your immune system work better. Some people with severe HIV will need to take more medicines to prevent other infections. People with HIV should be cared for by a doctor who specializes in treating HIV.

## HIV



### Questions for My Doctor

- How will HIV affect my day-to-day life?
- What is the best treatment for me?
- Are there any side effects from treatment?
- How can I prevent my HIV from spreading to others?
- How active can I be with HIV?
- What are the best ways for me to stay healthy?
- Can I have sex with HIV?
- How often should I see my doctor?
- Is there a medicine to prevent HIV?
- If I think I've been exposed to HIV, what should I do?



### Bottom Line

- HIV is a virus that makes it hard for your body to fight infections. When the immune system becomes very damaged from HIV, it is called AIDS.
- HIV is spread by sexual activity and by contact with infected blood. It can also spread from an infected mother to her newborn baby.
- Symptoms of early HIV may include sore throat; swollen glands in the neck, armpits, and groin; fever; and headache.
- Symptoms will be more serious if HIV develops into AIDS.
- Blood and saliva tests can show if you have HIV.
- Medicines can prevent HIV from getting worse. These medicines must be taken for the rest of your life.

### For More Information

- **Medline Plus:** [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hiv aids.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hiv aids.html)
- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:** [www.aidsinfo.nih.gov/other/factsheet.aspx](http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov/other/factsheet.aspx)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** [www.cdc.gov/actagainst aids/basics/](http://www.cdc.gov/actagainst aids/basics/)

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