

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIV & AIDS^

<p><b>WHAT IS HIV?</b></p>	<p><b>Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)</b> is a virus that weakens your immune system by destroying specific cells that fight infection and disease. HIV is an infection that progresses in three stages:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="321 283 1547 674"> <tr> <td data-bbox="321 283 431 348">STAGE 1</td> <td data-bbox="431 283 597 348">Acute HIV infection</td> <td data-bbox="597 283 1547 348">A person with acute HIV may develop flu-like symptoms within 2-4 weeks of infection, with symptoms that may last for several weeks.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="321 380 431 478">STAGE 2</td> <td data-bbox="431 380 597 478">Chronic HIV infection</td> <td data-bbox="597 380 1547 478">Once a person's body is infected, it is infected for life. However, with proper medical care, a person with HIV may live nearly as long as someone who does not have HIV. Untreated HIV can progress to AIDS, typically 8-10 years after testing positive for HIV.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="321 510 431 674">STAGE 3</td> <td data-bbox="431 510 597 674">AIDS</td> <td data-bbox="597 510 1547 674"><b>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)</b> is the most severe phase of HIV infection. AIDS is diagnosed when the CD4 T cell count falls below 200, or a person experiences an AIDS-defining complication (e.g., serious infection or cancer). Antiretroviral therapy (ART) can prevent HIV from destroying the immune system and advancing to AIDS. Without treatment, people with AIDS can survive about 3 years.</td> </tr> </table>	STAGE 1	Acute HIV infection	A person with acute HIV may develop flu-like symptoms within 2-4 weeks of infection, with symptoms that may last for several weeks.	STAGE 2	Chronic HIV infection	Once a person's body is infected, it is infected for life. However, with proper medical care, a person with HIV may live nearly as long as someone who does not have HIV. Untreated HIV can progress to AIDS, typically 8-10 years after testing positive for HIV.	STAGE 3	AIDS	<b>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)</b> is the most severe phase of HIV infection. AIDS is diagnosed when the CD4 T cell count falls below 200, or a person experiences an AIDS-defining complication (e.g., serious infection or cancer). Antiretroviral therapy (ART) can prevent HIV from destroying the immune system and advancing to AIDS. Without treatment, people with AIDS can survive about 3 years.
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<p><b>HOW IS HIV TRANSMITTED?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ Sexual contact (oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse) with an infected person when blood, pre-ejaculation fluid, semen, cervical/vaginal, and/or anal mucus secretions are exchanged</li> <li>✘ Sharing syringes, needles, cotton, cookers, and other drug injecting equipment with someone who is infected</li> <li>✘ Receiving contaminated blood or blood products (very unlikely after March 1985)</li> <li>✘ An infected mother, not on ART, can pass HIV to her unborn child before or during childbirth, or through breastfeeding</li> <li>✘ Receipt of transplant, tissue/organs, or artificial insemination from an infected donor (very rare)</li> <li>✘ Needle stick or other sharps injury in a health care setting involving an infected person (very rare)</li> </ul>									

## HIV IS NOT TRANSMITTED BY



Air or Water



Saliva, Sweat, Tears, or Closed-Mouth Kissing



Insects or Pets



Sharing Toilets, Food, or Drinks

## EARLY DIAGNOSIS OF HIV INFECTION IS IMPORTANT!

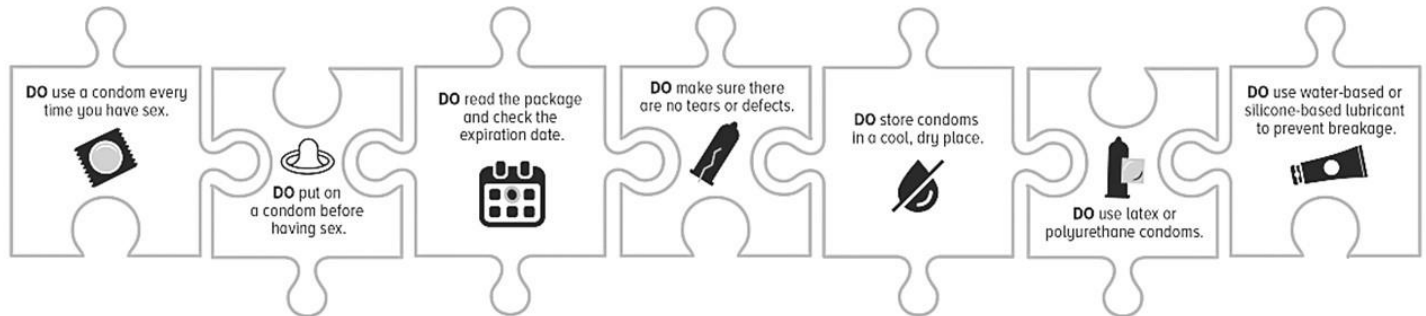
<p><b>GETTING TESTED FOR HIV:</b></p>	<p>Everyone should be tested at least once for HIV. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends persons who report any of the activities listed below should be tested at least yearly:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="321 1486 1521 1751"> <tr> <td data-bbox="321 1486 1521 1682"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ A man who has had sex with another man*</li> <li>✘ Injecting not medically prescribed drugs and sharing needles or other drug equipment</li> <li>✘ Exchanging sex for money or drugs</li> <li>✘ Diagnosed with or treated for another sexually transmitted infection, hepatitis, or tuberculosis</li> <li>✘ Having more than one sexual partner since their last HIV test</li> <li>✘ Having unprotected sex or sex with someone who has had unprotected sex</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="321 1713 1521 1751"> <p>* Sexually active men who have sex with men may benefit from more frequent testing (e.g., every 3–6 months)</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p>New infections may be identified as early as 4 weeks with new advances in screening tests. Free anonymous and confidential testing and counseling is available at every health department in Kentucky. If you have HIV, seek care immediately and a provider will help determine the best treatment plan. In many cases, early treatment can enhance a person's ability to remain healthy as long as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✘ A man who has had sex with another man*</li> <li>✘ Injecting not medically prescribed drugs and sharing needles or other drug equipment</li> <li>✘ Exchanging sex for money or drugs</li> <li>✘ Diagnosed with or treated for another sexually transmitted infection, hepatitis, or tuberculosis</li> <li>✘ Having more than one sexual partner since their last HIV test</li> <li>✘ Having unprotected sex or sex with someone who has had unprotected sex</li> </ul>	<p>* Sexually active men who have sex with men may benefit from more frequent testing (e.g., every 3–6 months)</p>
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**Remember, you cannot tell whether someone has HIV just by looking at them!**

**HOW CAN I PREVENT HIV?**

- ✘ Educate yourself and others about HIV infection and AIDS
- ✘ Do not share needles or other drug paraphernalia
- ✘ Practice "safer" sex:
  - ✓ Abstinence (not having sex of any kind)
  - ✓ Sex only with a person who does not have HIV, does not practice unsafe sex, or inject drugs
  - ✓ Using either a male or female condom or dental dam (for oral sex)
  - ✓ Do not share sex toys
- ✘ Persons at higher risk can help prevent HIV infections through the use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)
- ✘ Exercise universal precautions when coming into contact with HIV infected blood, semen, or vaginal fluid

**HOW TO CORRECTLY USE A MALE CONDOM:**



**WHAT IS PrEP?**

PrEP means taking HIV medications daily (i.e., Truvada, Descovy) by persons who have not been diagnosed with HIV, but who are at risk of acquiring HIV via sex or injection drug use. When taken daily, this medication can effectively stop HIV infection. Persons taking PrEP should continue to use condom for maximum protection.

**WHAT IS PEP?**

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is an HIV medication taken within 72 hours (3 days) of a potential exposure to HIV. Once prescribed, PEP will be dosed 1-2 times daily for 28 days. PEP is intended for persons who have tested negative for HIV or are uncertain of their HIV status and should only be used in emergency situations.

**WOMEN AND HIV/AIDS**

**All pregnant women should have blood tests to check for HIV infection.**  
 Women diagnosed with HIV who are not on treatment can pass HIV infection to their babies during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and through breastfeeding of passing HIV to the baby to 1% or less if they practice all of the following:

- ✘ Take ART daily
- ✘ Give HIV treatment to her baby for 4-6 weeks after giving birth
- ✘ Do not breastfeed or pre-chew her baby's food

**UNDETECTABLE = UNTRANSMISSIBLE**

Persons with HIV who take their HIV medicine as prescribed may remain virally suppressed or undetectable and healthy, with effectively no risk of sexually transmitting HIV to their HIV-negative partners.

**LIVING HEALTHY WITH HIV**

Begin treatment as soon as possible and take prescribed medications daily. Maintaining an undetectable viral load is the key to living a longer, healthier life.

- ✘ Healthy living behaviors for the general public are even more important for those living with HIV:
  - ✓ A healthy diet provides energy and nutrients a person's body needs to fight disease and infections (It may also improve absorption of prescribed medications and may help offset potential side effects.)
  - ✓ Exercise strengthens the immune system to better combat infections
- ✘ Discordant couples are at higher risk of HIV transmission:

<b>HIV Negative Partner Should:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Be routinely tested for HIV</li> <li>○ Ask their health care provider about PrEP</li> </ul>
<b>HIV Positive Partner Should:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take ART daily as prescribed</li> </ul>
<b>Both Partners Should:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use condoms during sex</li> <li>○ Not engage in sex with other people</li> </ul>

**THIS AGENCY PROVIDES QUALITY SERVICES TO ALL PATIENTS, REGARDLESS OF HIV STATUS.**

**IF YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION CALL:**

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

**Kentucky HIV/AIDS Program 502-564-6539**

-or-

Your local health department's HIV/AIDS Coordinator

^retrieved 6/17/2020 from: <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/>