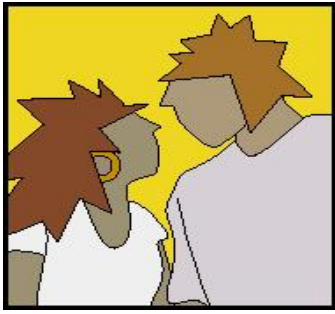


## About HIV and AIDS



AIDS is a disease that can be deadly. It is caused by a virus called HIV. The most common ways to get AIDS are having sex with a person who has HIV or AIDS or sharing drug needles with someone who has HIV or AIDS. You can also get HIV from a blood transfusion, if the HIV is in the blood. But that is rare. Strict rules about who can donate blood and tests on donated blood make transfusions very safe. You **cannot** get HIV by donating blood. You **cannot** get HIV just by being in the same room with an infected person, or just by shaking hands or hugging an infected person. In the last few years, AIDS has increased most among women, African Americans & Hispanics.

### Find Out If You Have HIV

You can find out if you have HIV at home with a test kit available at drugstores without a doctor's prescription. To use the test, you prick your finger to get a blood sample. Then you send the sample to the address given in the directions. You don't have to give your name. Be aware, though, that other tests, sometimes called rapid HIV test kits, have been advertised and sold over the Internet and elsewhere. These kits do not require you to send the tests to a lab. They are not approved and they may not be accurate. Your doctor's office or clinic is a good place to get a test for HIV. If the test says that you have HIV, ask your doctor or clinic:

- . Do I need more tests?
- . Do I need to start treatment?
- . Do I need to make any lifestyle changes at this time?

### If you're a woman and you think you may be pregnant, find out right away if you have HIV.

Treatment early in pregnancy can greatly reduce the chance that your baby will have HIV. There are many drugs that have been approved to treat HIV and AIDS. They can help people with HIV or

AIDS feel better for a longer time. But there is nothing yet that will cure AIDS.

### Watch Out for 'Miracle Cures'

Some treatments are advertised for AIDS as "miracle cures" or as having some "secret ingredient." They are not approved. They have not been scientifically tested. There is no proof that they work. They could even hurt you. Don't use anything to treat HIV or AIDS unless your doctor or clinic says it is o.k.

### Studies of Unproven AIDS Medicines

Many medicines **are** being tested in scientific studies to see if they are safe and if they work against HIV and AIDS. Sometimes people with HIV or AIDS can get these experimental medicines by joining the studies. To find out about them, you or your doctor can call 1-800-TRIALS-A (1-800-874-2572).

### Guard Against Other Illnesses

If you are infected with HIV, tell your doctor or clinic if your symptoms get worse or if you get any new symptoms.



They may try a different treatment. To avoid germs in food that could make you much sicker, follow these food safety rules:

- . When you handle food, wash your hands and kitchen utensils with hot water and soap.
- . Cook food thoroughly.
- . Make sure milk, dairy products, and juices are pasteurized.
- . Cook eggs and seafood well. Never eat them raw.

### Do You Have More Questions?

Ask your doctor. If you have any questions about AIDS, call 1-800-342-2437 or 1-800-344-7432 (Spanish). For the hearing impaired, call 1-800-AIDSTTY (1-800-243-7889).

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