

What is HIV?



HIV is a short for
'Human Immunodeficiency Virus'.

It is a virus (a germ) that lives inside your body.

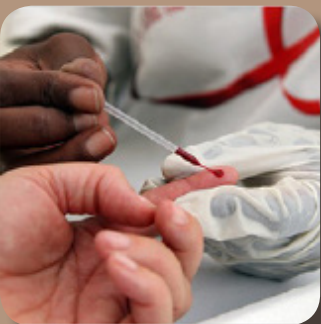


HIV makes it hard for the body to fight infections.

Someone with HIV could get ill more easily than other people.



You cannot tell if someone has HIV by looking at them.



A person can only find out if they have HIV by taking a test.



There are medicines to help people with HIV feel better.

But at the moment there is no cure.



People with HIV can live a long and healthy life if they take their medicines correctly.



When a person with HIV gets certain infections and cancers, this is called AIDS.

AIDS is a short way of saying '**Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**'.



HIV is different from AIDS.

People with HIV who take their medicines may never have AIDS.



If someone has AIDS, it does not mean they will die.

Many of the illnesses that make up AIDS can be cured or managed.

Getting tested for HIV



You can be tested for HIV at:

A GP surgery.

An NHS sexual health clinic.



When you see a doctor for another reason, you may be offered an HIV test.



This test is confidential (private).



A member of staff will talk through what will happen.

They will try to answer any questions you have.



If you have the test, a small amount of blood will be taken from your arm.



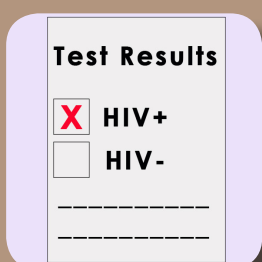
You may have to wait up to two weeks for the results.



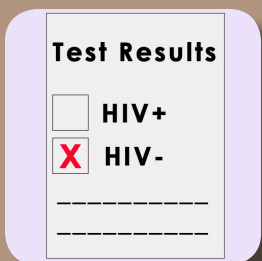
Some clinics do a test by using a drop of blood from your finger or fluid from your mouth.



These results will be ready in minutes.



If you have HIV, it will say HIV positive.



If you do not have HIV, it will say HIV negative.



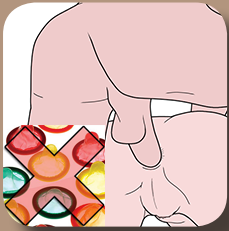
If you are HIV positive (HIV+), staff will help you get medical care and support.



Remember your results are confidential.

You do not have to tell anyone about them.

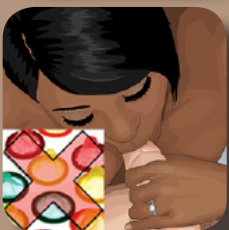
How is HIV passed to other people?



Anal sex without a condom.



Vaginal sex without a condom.



Oral sex without a condom.



Sharing drug injecting equipment.



From a mother to her baby during pregnancy or birth.



From a mother to her baby during breastfeeding.



With the right treatment during pregnancy and birth, and by not breastfeeding, HIV will not be passed on from mother to child.



You are safe to hug someone and kiss or touch your partner's vagina or penis.



It is safe to use the same knife and fork, cup and plate.



It is safe to use the same towel or bathroom.



Using a condom during sex is a good way to stop HIV passing from one person to another.

Treatment



If you find out you have HIV (HIV+), it is important to look after yourself.



You should have regular health checks to make sure your body is able to fight off infections.



When your body is not able to fight infections, you will need to start taking HIV treatment.



Treatment usually means taking a mixture of medicines at the same time every day.



It is important that you take the medicines exactly as your doctor tells you to.



Sometimes these medicines can make you feel a bit poorly.

Talk to your doctor about it and they should be able to help you with this.

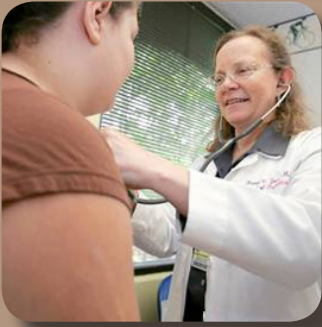


HIV medicines can help people with HIV and AIDS to live long and healthy lives.



There is a lot of support to help people deal with living with HIV.

Looking after your health when you have HIV



Have regular health checks.



Take your medicine as advised.



Eat a healthy mixture of foods.

Your doctor will tell you about this.



Exercise.



Do not smoke.



Get enough sleep and rest.



It can be good to tell someone you have HIV so you can get the care and support you need.

easyhealth.org.uk

This leaflet was made by the Easyhealth team
at Generate Opportunities Ltd.



NHS choices

Easyhealth was given permission by NHS Choices to use their health information.



The '**Quality Checking Group**' at Generate checked that the information is easy to understand.

This is a group of advisors with learning disabilities.



nam aidsmap
HIV & AIDS - sharing knowledge, changing lives

NAM have checked the information is medically correct.



2013

March

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This information was made in
March 2013.