

Facts & DETAILS

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

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What is AIDS?

AIDS is the advanced effect of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) on the immune system.

How common is AIDS?

HIV and AIDS remain common diseases in many parts of the world, but AIDS diagnoses have been decreasing in the United States due to HIV treatment.

How do people become infected?

Untreated HIV infection can lead to AIDS. The HIV virus must enter into your blood in order to become infected. Certain behaviors put individuals at an increased risk for getting HIV. These behaviors include:

- Having unprotected sex (without a condom) with multiple partners or with someone who has had many partners
- Sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs
- From an infected mother to her baby during birth or through breastfeeding

You **cannot** become infected with HIV through casual contact. Casual contact includes being coughed or sneezed on, using the same water fountain or swimming pool, shaking hands, hugging, or eating food prepared by an infected individual.

What are the signs and symptoms of AIDS?

AIDS damages the body's immune system and destroys its ability to fight illness. AIDS can also cause brain damage. Though you cannot die from AIDS, the disease allows other infections and diseases to invade the body, which can cause death.

How long can you spread AIDS?

You cannot spread AIDS to someone else. The time between someone getting HIV and receiving an AIDS diagnosis is usually 10 to 15 years if they do not take regular HIV treatment as recommended by their healthcare provider. People with HIV who follow an appropriate HIV treatment plan may not progress to AIDS.

Who is at risk for AIDS?

People who do not know they are infected with HIV or do not take regular HIV treatment as recommended by their healthcare provider are at risk for developing infectious complications, weakened ability to fight infections, and AIDS.

How is AIDS treated?

Although HIV and AIDS cannot be cured, antiviral medications can be used to reduce the amount of virus in the blood and body fluids. These medications help prevent other infections and reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others.

How can you prevent AIDS?

AIDS is the result of unmanaged or untreated HIV. Some ways to prevent AIDS include the following:

- See your healthcare provider as recommended
- Take medications as prescribed
- Eat healthy and live a lifestyle that promotes good health

Talk to your healthcare provider if you feel there is a problem with your health. Minimize the risk of additional infections through good handwashing, protecting yourself from other sexually transmitted infections, covering your cough, and living a healthy lifestyle.

Confidential HIV testing, counseling, and referral services can be done at the Sedgwick County Division of Health, 2716 West Central Avenue, Wichita, Kansas.

For More Information:

Sedgwick County Division of Health
1900 E. 9th St.
Wichita, KS 67214
(316) 660-7300
www.sedgwickcounty.org



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