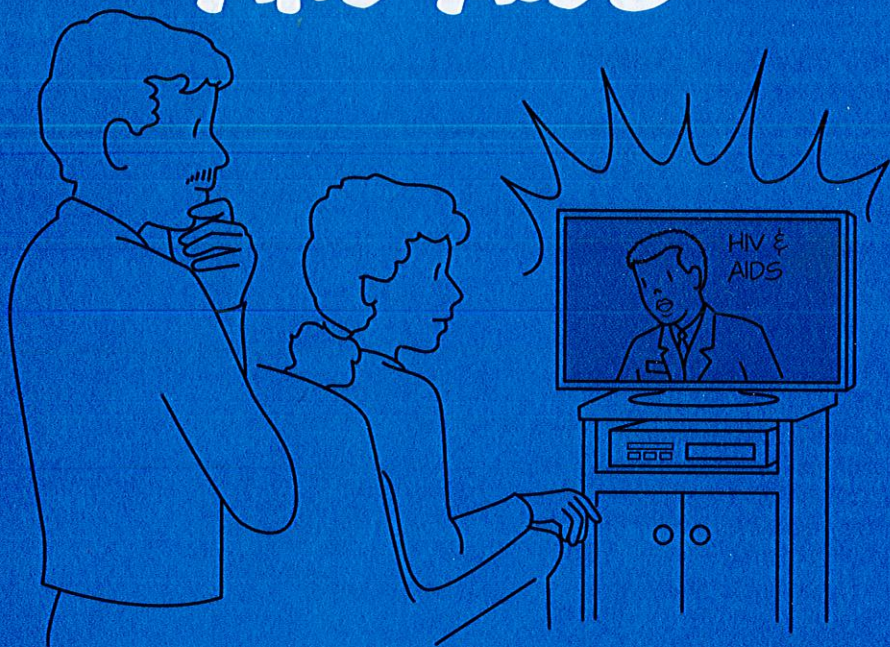


What everyone should know

# ABOUT HIV AND AIDS



# WHAT ARE HIV AND AIDS?\*

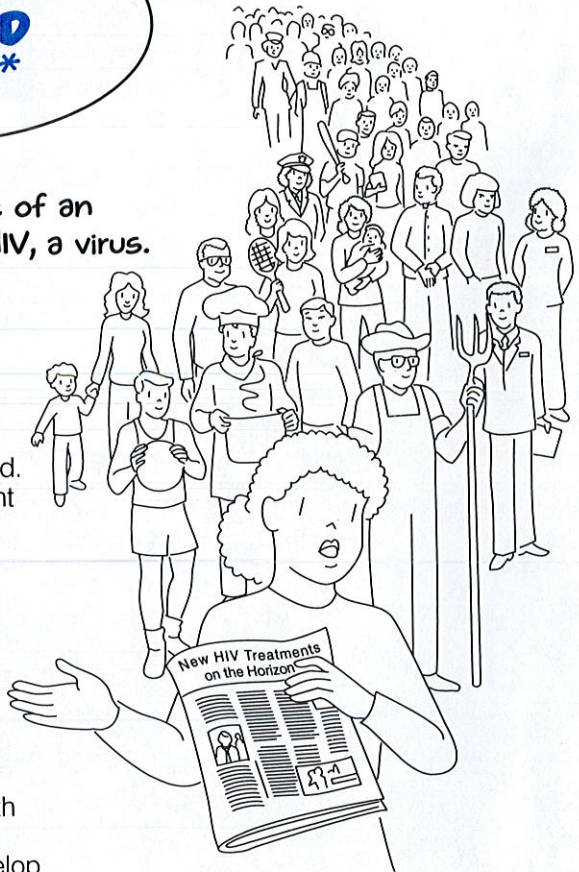
AIDS is the last stage of an infection caused by HIV, a virus.

## HIV WEAKENS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM,

the body's natural defense against illness. There is currently no cure for HIV. But it can often be managed. Early and ongoing treatment can help people with HIV live longer, healthier lives.

## AIDS IS THE LAST STAGE OF HIV

—the immune system becomes very weak. It can't protect against illness very well. With treatment, not everyone with HIV gets to this stage. But most of those who do develop AIDS eventually die from the disease or related conditions.



\*HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus.  
AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

### Please read:

Talk to your health-care provider! This booklet is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health-care provider.

2019 Edition

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# WHY SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT HIV AND AIDS?

Because your knowledge can help you protect yourself and those you love from HIV. It's important to:



## KNOW HOW HIV IS SPREAD

—and know how it isn't spread.

## LEARN HOW HIV AFFECTS THE BODY

—and how treatment can help people with HIV lead healthy, active lives and lower the risk of passing the virus to others.

## GET HIV TESTING

—most teens and adults should be tested at least once. There are different tests available.



Your knowledge can also help you treat people who have HIV in an understanding way.

Learn more...

## HOW IS HIV SPREAD?

HIV is spread through contact with body fluids—mainly blood, semen and vaginal fluids. This contact usually happens:

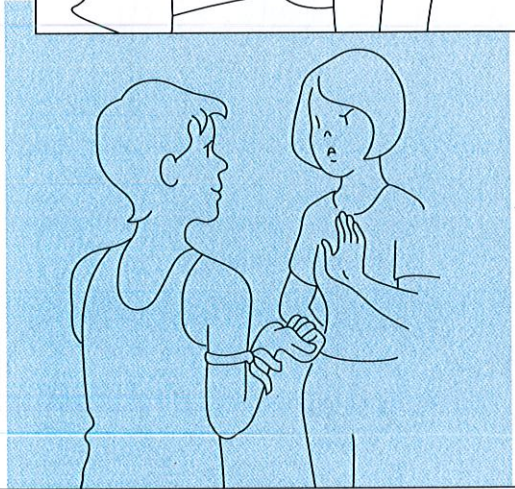
### **DURING VAGINAL, ANAL OR ORAL SEX**

with a person who has HIV



### **WHEN SHARING A NEEDLE**

or syringe with a person who has HIV—to inject drugs, make tattoos, pierce body parts or for any other reason



### **FROM A MOTHER WHO HAS HIV TO HER BABY**

before birth, during birth or while breastfeeding.

### **HIV MAY ALSO BE SPREAD**

through donated blood or blood products. But this is very unlikely now because:

- all donors are carefully screened
- all donors' blood and blood products are tested before being used.

# HIV IS NOT SPREAD

through the air or through casual activities, such as:

## SITTING NEXT TO SOMEONE

at work, at school, on a bus  
or elsewhere

## SHAKING HANDS,

or giving a hug

## DRY OR SOCIAL KISSING

NOTE: Kissing can spread  
other STDs,\* such as  
herpes. Contact the  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention (CDC)  
for more information—  
see page 14.

## EATING IN A RESTAURANT

or cafeteria

## USING RESTROOMS,

drinking fountains or telephones

## SWIMMING

in a pool or using a hot tub

## DONATING BLOOD

## BEING BITTEN

by mosquitoes or other insects.



\*STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) are also called STIs (sexually transmitted infections).

**It's safe to have casual contact  
with people who have HIV or AIDS!**

# HOW HIV AFFECTS THE BODY

## HIV ENTERS THE BODY

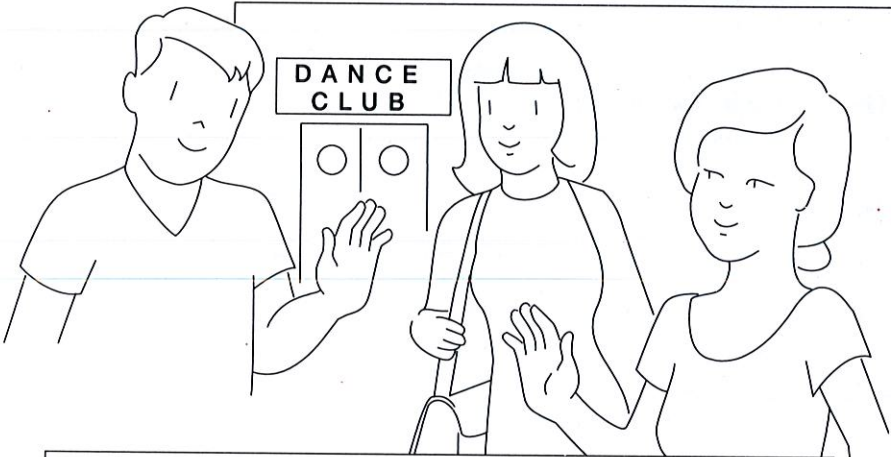
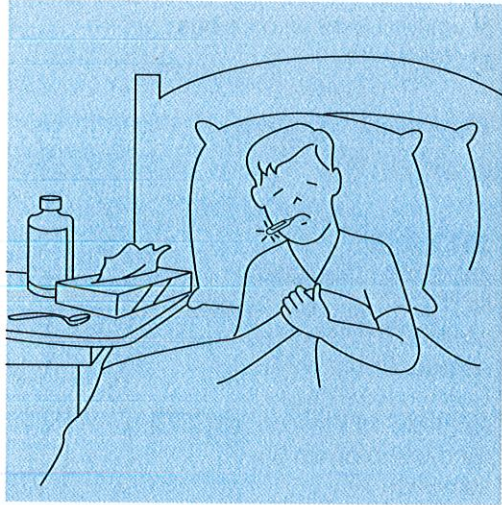
Within weeks of being infected, many people feel like they have the flu. But some people have no symptoms at all.

## THE IMMUNE SYSTEM FIGHTS BACK

For example, it makes special cells and proteins to kill HIV. But it can't kill all the HIV.

## THERE MAY BE NO MORE SIGNS OF HIV FOR YEARS

A person with HIV may look and feel healthy during this time. But inside his or her body, HIV is damaging the immune system.



## A HEALTHY-LOOKING PERSON CAN SPREAD HIV!

A person with HIV doesn't have to look or feel sick to be able to pass the virus to you. The person may go years without even knowing that he or she has the virus!

## **EVENTUALLY, OTHER SIGNS MAY BEGIN TO SHOW**

As HIV progresses, people may notice lasting signs, including:

- swollen lymph glands in the neck, underarm or groin area
- recurrent fever, including "night sweats"
- rapid weight loss for no apparent reason
- constant tiredness
- diarrhea and decreased appetite
- white spots or unusual blemishes in the mouth
- flaky skin or rashes
- oral or vaginal yeast infections that are frequent or hard to treat
- pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) that's hard to treat.

HIV may also damage the nervous system, causing short-term memory loss, confusion and other symptoms.

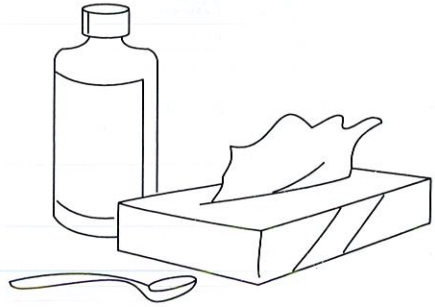


**See a health-care provider if you have any of these signs for more than a week. These signs may be caused by other illnesses, but it's important to get a medical opinion.**

# AIDS IS THE LAST STAGE OF HIV INFECTION

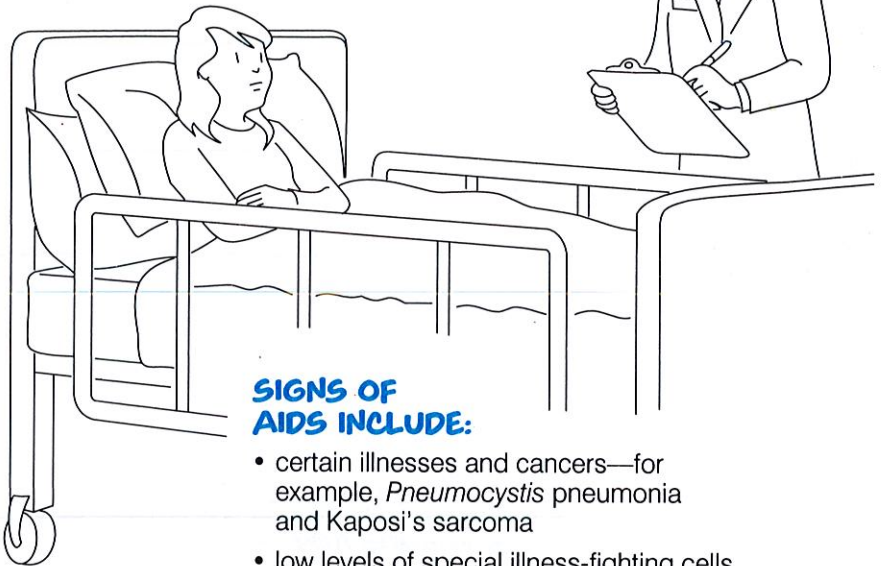
## PEOPLE MAY NOT DEVELOP AIDS

Some people with HIV may never develop AIDS. In general, they get treatment early and follow it closely. It's also possible to live without signs of AIDS for 10 years or longer—or to show signs much sooner.



## PEOPLE WITH AIDS GET SICK MORE EASILY

That's because HIV has damaged their immune system. The body is unable to protect itself from illnesses that are usually mild or rare.



## SIGNS OF AIDS INCLUDE:

- certain illnesses and cancers—for example, *Pneumocystis pneumonia* and Kaposi's sarcoma
- low levels of special illness-fighting cells in the body.



# ABOUT HIV TREATMENT

While there's no cure yet, early and ongoing treatment can help people with HIV live longer, healthier lives. Treatments may be used to help:

## FIGHT HIV

—and lower the amount of virus in the body. With regular use, HIV medicine can keep the virus at an undetectable level. This effectively reduces all risk of sexually passing HIV to an HIV-negative partner.



## LOWER RISKS DURING PREGNANCY

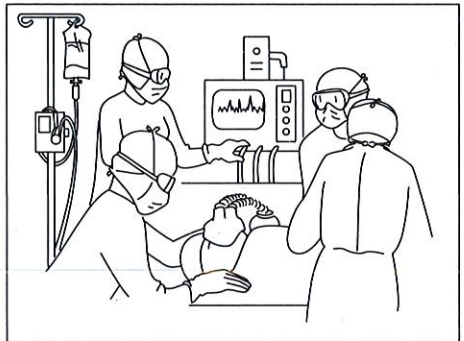
and childbirth. Regular use of HIV medicine and/or a planned Caesarean birth may help prevent transmission of HIV from a mother with HIV to her unborn child.



## PREVENT OR FIGHT INFECTIONS, CANCERS AND ILLNESSES

that people with HIV or AIDS are at higher risk for. Treatments may include:

- medications
- vaccines (shots)
- surgery
- radiation.



If you suspect you were exposed to HIV—for example, through sex (vaginal, anal or oral) or drug use—contact your health-care provider right away. Be sure to discuss the risks and benefits of any treatment with your health-care provider.

# ANYONE CAN GET HIV!

You can get HIV if you act in risky ways—even once!

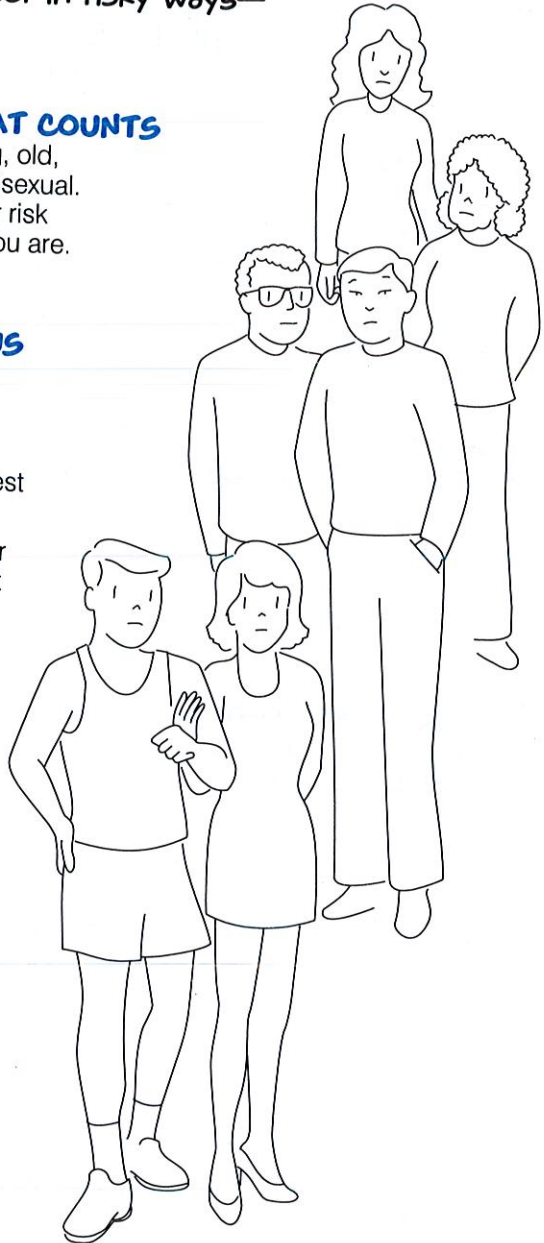
## IT'S WHAT YOU DO THAT COUNTS

It doesn't matter if you're young, old, male, female, gay, straight or bisexual. Certain behaviors increase your risk of getting HIV, no matter who you are.

## KNOW YOUR HIV STATUS

- Most teens and most adults should get tested for HIV at least once.
- Women should have an HIV test during each pregnancy.
- Get tested at least once a year if you do things that put you at higher risk for HIV. (These include having sex with a new partner or injecting drugs.)

A health-care provider or HIV counselor can help you decide when to get tested. Ask if you need testing for other STDs, too!



Getting tested is very important because many people who have HIV don't know they have it.

# HIV TESTING IS SIMPLE AND RELIABLE

## FIND AN HIV TESTING SITE

You can call:

- a health-care provider
- your state or local health department
- the hotlines on page 14.

Make sure to get all of your questions answered before and after your test.

## ASK ABOUT ANONYMOUS TESTING

This means you don't have to give your name—no one but you will know your results. If it's not available, ask who may see your results.



## CONSIDER A "RAPID" HIV TEST

The rapid test can give you preliminary results during the same visit. Be sure to learn your results. Then, discuss them with your health-care provider or HIV/STD counselor.

A rapid home testing kit is also available. Make sure the kit you use is approved by the FDA. Call the hotlines on page 14 for more information.

**Don't donate blood in order to be tested!**

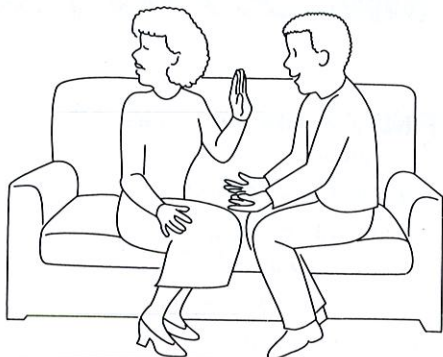
## UNDERSTAND HIV TEST RESULTS

- "Positive" (a positive result confirmed by a second test) means a person has HIV. It doesn't necessarily mean that he or she has AIDS yet or will get it soon.
- "Negative" means the test didn't find signs of HIV. But a person may have to be retested if testing was done soon after any risky behavior. For the type of test that detects HIV antibodies, it may take the body about 3-12 weeks (or longer in some cases) to make enough to detect.

# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM HIV!

## KNOW THAT NOT HAVING SEX IS SAFEST

It's the only sure way to avoid getting HIV and other STDs through sex. It's also the only sure way to prevent pregnancy.



## DON'T MIX ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS WITH SEX

You'll be more likely to engage in risky sexual behavior if you do.

## NEVER SHARE NEEDLES OR SYRINGES

- If you use drugs, get help to stop. Contact SAMHSA's National Helpline at 1-800-662-4357 or <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>.
- If you keep shooting drugs, take steps to reduce your risk. Never share drug equipment. Use a new, sterile needle and syringe each time. For information on needle exchange programs, contact the CDC (see page 14).



## ASK ABOUT HIV PrEP

Treatment called PrEP helps protect some people at higher risk of getting HIV. This includes some partners of people with HIV and some people who inject drugs. It involves taking a pill every day and continuing to use other prevention methods (such as condoms). PrEP must be prescribed.



## If you decide to have sex:

### USE A MALE LATEX CONDOM

Condoms don't make sex 100% safe.\* But they can help reduce the risk of HIV and other STDs.

Use a new latex condom properly for each act of vaginal, anal or oral sex.

- Read the label and instructions carefully. Check the expiration date.
- Put it on as soon as the penis is hard and before any vaginal, anal or oral contact.
- Use a water-based or silicone-based lubricant for vaginal and anal sex. Never use latex condoms with oil-based products, such as petroleum jelly or body lotion. Avoid nonoxynol-9, too.

If you cannot use a male latex condom, find out about synthetic male or female condoms. Contact the CDC (see page 14) to learn more.

\*Condoms can slip or break. Also, some STDs can be caused by contact with infected areas not covered by a condom.

### LIMIT YOUR SEXUAL PARTNERS

The more people you have sex with, the higher your risk of being exposed to HIV.

### CHOOSE LESS RISKY BEHAVIORS

For example, the risk of getting HIV from oral sex is much lower than from anal or vaginal sex. (Anal sex is the riskiest. But remember that no form of sex is completely risk-free!)



# SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Can I get HIV by donating blood?**

No. Only sterile equipment is used by blood banks and blood collection centers. And needles are thrown away after just one use.

**Where can I get more information about HIV and AIDS?**

Contact your health-care provider, your state or local health department, or a local HIV/AIDS organization. Or, contact the CDC:

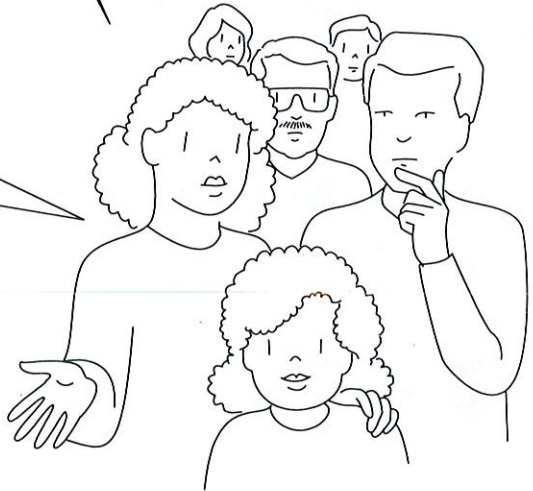
1-800-CDC-INFO  
(1-800-232-4636)

1-888-232-6348 (TTY)

[www.cdc.gov/hiv/](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/)

**What if I may have recently been exposed to HIV?**

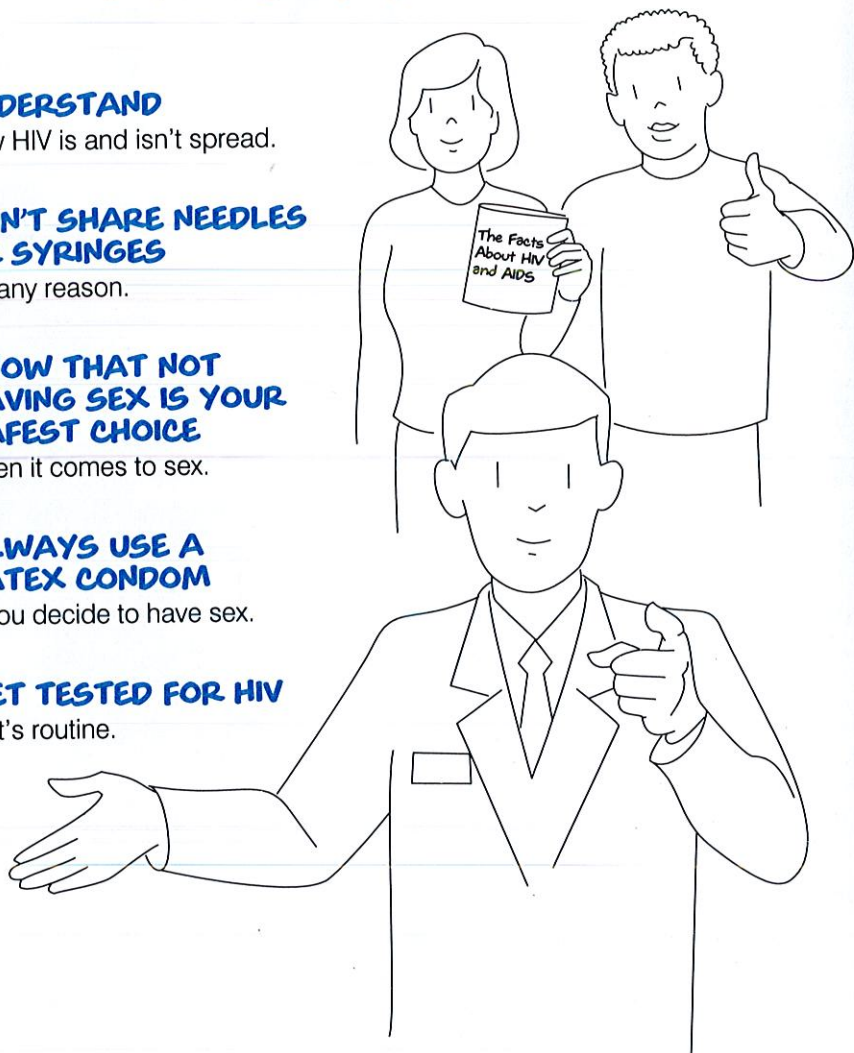
Contact your health-care provider right away. There is medication that lowers your risk of becoming HIV-positive if taken soon after exposure. If you do become HIV-positive, early and ongoing treatment can help keep you feeling well. It can also lower the risk of passing HIV to others.



So—

## DO YOUR PART IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV!

- ✓ **UNDERSTAND**  
how HIV is and isn't spread.
- ✓ **DON'T SHARE NEEDLES OR SYRINGES**  
for any reason.
- ✓ **KNOW THAT NOT HAVING SEX IS YOUR SAFEST CHOICE**  
when it comes to sex.
- ✓ **ALWAYS USE A LATEX CONDOM**  
if you decide to have sex.
- ✓ **GET TESTED FOR HIV**  
—it's routine.



Share what you've learned about HIV and AIDS—help destroy the myths.

