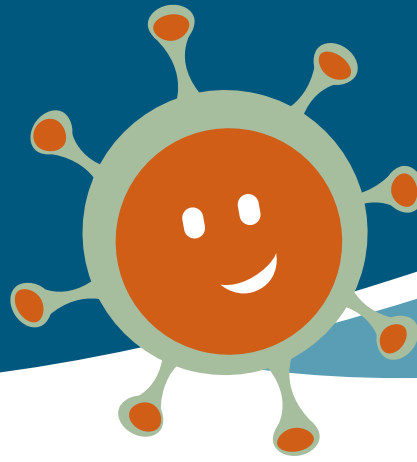


HIV/AIDS



What is it?

Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system. If left untreated, HIV can lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome or AIDS. There is no cure for HIV, but with treatment, people with HIV can lead long and healthy lives.

How can you get it?

You can get HIV through vaginal or anal sex with a partner who has HIV (if your vagina or anus comes into contact with your partner's sexual fluids). Sexual fluids include ejaculate, vaginal fluid, and anal fluid. You can also get HIV through non-sexual activities that put you in contact with someone else's blood that has HIV, such as sharing needles like injection drug equipment or tattooing needles. HIV can also be spread from mother to child during pregnancy, labour, birth or through breastfeeding. If the mother is being treated for HIV, the chance of passing HIV onto the child is very low.

How do you know if you have it?

Many people with HIV do not show signs after infection. Sometimes it can take years for the body to show signs of infection. **If you do have signs, they may include:**



Fever



Headaches



Chills



Rapid weight loss



Not feeling hungry



Testing

Testing for HIV happens through a blood test. This can be done by drawing blood from your arm, or by pricking your finger to get a few drops of blood. Tests that use the finger-prick method are called rapid HIV tests and can provide results within minutes of being tested.



To know for sure if you have it, you need to get tested.



Treatment

Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) is used to treat HIV and it usually includes taking a combination of three antiretroviral drugs daily. There is no cure for HIV, but people living with HIV on ART can live long and healthy lives.



Prevention

You can reduce your risk of getting HIV by using barriers such as condoms when engaging in sexual activities and by not sharing needles. You and your partner can get tested before engaging in sexual activities or sharing needles to ensure neither of you has HIV.

PrEP and PeP

	PrEP	PEP
What is it?	Pre-exposure prophylaxis or PrEP is a medication taken daily that you can take to protect yourself from getting HIV.	Post-exposure prophylaxis or PEP is a medication you can take to protect yourself from getting HIV.
When do you take it?	Before HIV exposure	After HIV exposure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take within 3 days or 72 hours after possible HIV exposure
Why would you take it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you have sex partner(s) with HIV ● If you don't know the status of your sexual partner(s) ● If you share drug injection equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In emergency situations ● If you have been sexually assaulted ● If you don't know the status of the person you had sex with or shared drug injection equipment with
How effective is it?	If taken properly, PrEP can reduce the chance of getting HIV from sex by over 90% and from injection drug use by over 70%.	If taken properly, PEP can prevent HIV infection, but it is not always effective. The sooner you take PEP (within the 3 day period) the better chance it will work.

Did you know?

- PrEP and PEP are covered by the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program?

If a person living with HIV on ART has an **Undetectable** viral load (meaning there is little HIV in their blood) for at least six months, the virus is **Untransmittable** (meaning you cannot give the disease to someone else). This is also known as **U=U**.

- People with HIV and their partner(s) can lead safe and fulfilling sex lives.



Native Women's
Association of Canada

L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

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