

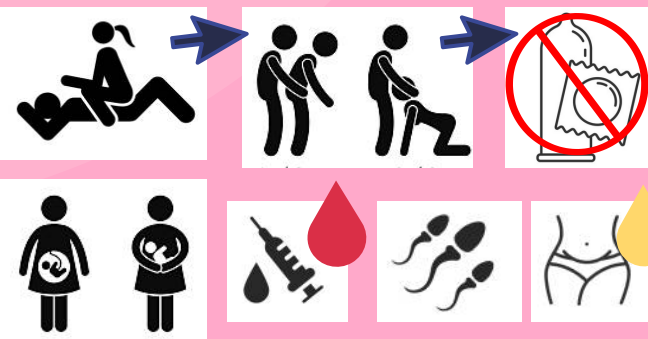
# What is HIV?

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks your body's immune system and if not treated can lead to AIDS. Infection with HIV does not mean you have AIDS.

Women and girls are at higher risk for HIV than men and boys!

## ✓ You can get HIV by:

- Having unprotected anal and vaginal sex without a condom and some risk with oral sex.
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding if the mom has HIV. However if the mom is on ARVs or has a very low viral load the risk of transmitting HIV to the baby is very low.
- Sharing body fluids like blood (e.g. sharing needles), semen, pre-cum and vaginal fluids.



If both people have HIV they must still use a condom as it is possible for them to spread different strains of HIV to each other!

## To protect yourself from HIV:

- Use condoms consistently and correctly during penetrative sex.
- Consider taking PrEP. Check to see if PrEP is available at your clinic.
- Limit your number of sexual partners.
- When handling blood, always wear gloves and clean up blood spills immediately.
- Make sure your vagina is properly lubricated during sex, using a water-based lube if needed, to lessen the possibility of tearing and bleeding inside the vagina.
- Do not share needles or sharp objects.
- If you have been raped or feel like you have been exposed to HIV, go to your clinic and ask for PEP.

## WHERE TO GET HELP:

### You can contact:

- **National AIDS Helpline:** 0800 012 322
- **National Counselling Line:** 0861 322 322

### Organizations that offer help and support:

- **Thuthuzela Care Centres:** there are over 50 centres nationwide that offer emergency services to victims of rape and those accompanying them. To find a centre near you visit [www.gov.za/TCC](http://www.gov.za/TCC)



HER VOICE



## Things to know about:

# Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

## For Adolescent Girls and Young Women with Disabilities



## ✧ You cannot get HIV by:

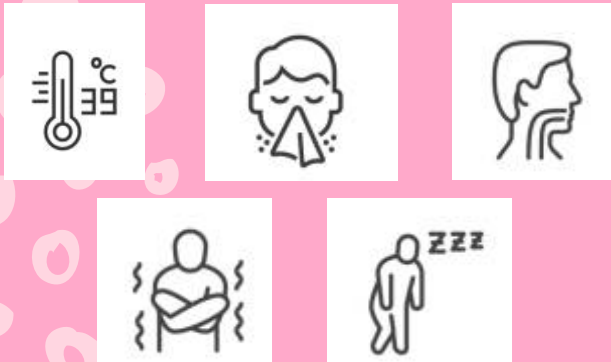
- Kissing.
- Sharing the toilet or spaces with someone living with HIV.
- Sharing plates or utensils like spoons.
- Insect bites.

## ✧ Myths (lies) about HIV:

- Having sex with a virgin or a person with a disability will cure HIV.
- Living with HIV is a punishment or curse.

## Symptoms (signs) of HIV:

You cannot see if a person is infected with HIV. However, in the first few weeks of an HIV infection flu-like symptoms can show like a fever, sore throat, chills and tiredness (fatigue).



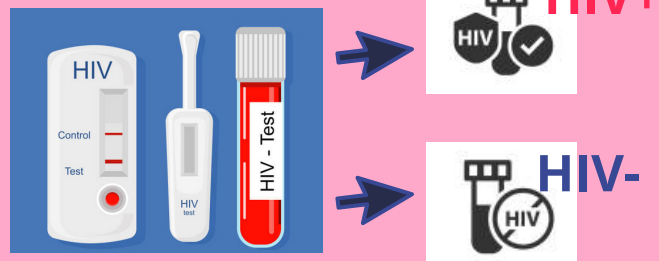
In the first few weeks of HIV infection you are the most infectious, meaning a greater risk of spreading HIV.

**GET TESTED!**



## How to know if you have HIV?

- The only way to find out if you have HIV is to get an HIV test. This can be a blood or oral-self test or test in a clinic.
- After getting tested you will know your 'status'.
- Your Status: **HIV+ (positive)** means you have HIV, or **HIV- (negative)** means you do not have HIV.
- You cannot be tested without agreeing to be tested (consenting) and your results are confidential (only you and your doctor know the results).



Knowing your HIV status is important to allow you to take the steps to look after yourself, your loved ones and your partners.

All women should get tested before or during pregnancy as early detection of HIV can allow for treatment and care to lower the risk of HIV being passed to the baby.

## LIVING WITH HIV

You can enjoy a long and productive life with a healthy diet and lifestyle and medical treatment, including Antiretroviral Therapy (ART).

- ART is used to treat HIV. HIV cannot be cured, but ART helps people living with HIV live a long and healthy life.
- Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) are the HIV medicines used in ART.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is HIV medicine taken after possible exposure to HIV to prevent the virus from taking hold in your body.
- PEP should ideally be taken within 72 hours of possible exposure to HIV and should only be used in emergencies, not regularly.

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a pill or an injection taken to prevent HIV infection for people who have tested HIV- and want to prevent HIV infection.

