

HIV / AIDS Fact Sheet

What is HIV / AIDS?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a retrovirus that can lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), a condition in which the immune system begins to fail, leading to life-threatening infections we ordinarily would be able to fight naturally.

Infection with HIV occurs by the transfer of blood, semen, vaginal fluid, pre-ejaculate, and breast milk. HIV can be spread by sexual contact with an infected person, by sharing needles and/or syringes (mainly for drug use) with someone who is infected, or through transfusions of infected blood.

Getting HIV through oral sex (both giving and receiving) is possible but very rare.

What are the symptoms (if any)?

The symptoms of an early HIV infection are very similar to having a bad cold, and can include fever, headache, rash, sore throat, chest infections, and vomiting.

How is it treated?

There is currently no cure for HIV. However the condition is not longer considered to be life threatening if it is detected early and properly managed by specialists. Indeed, people with HIV who take treatment will remain healthy and should have a normal life expectancy.

Treatment consists of highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART), and advances continue to be made improving both quality of life and prognosis. If you have tested positive for HIV you will be referred to a specialist.

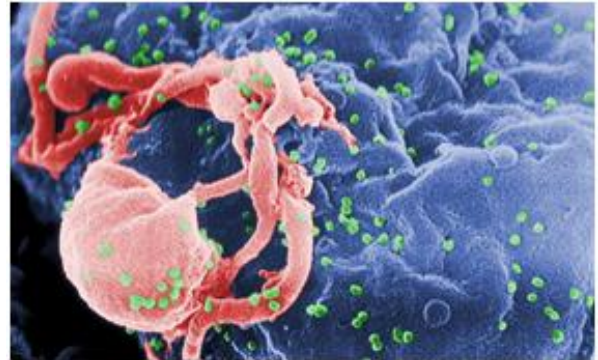


Image: CDC and C. Goldsmith

Electron micrograph of HIV-1 budding (in green) from cultured lymphocyte

What happens if you do not get treated?

HIV will damage your body by reducing the number of specific cells called CD4 cells. Your body relies on these cells to help it fight off infections and other diseases. The numbers of these CD4 cells are reduced by the HIV virus, so you are not able to fight off infections as you normally would be able to, which can lead to death.

Babies born to HIV-infected women may become infected before or during birth or through breast-feeding after birth.

Better2Know Testing Information

You should wait at least 10 days before getting tested for HIV. Better2Know offers a number of tests including rapid tests which take only 20 minutes to run, as well as lab based tests which can test for viral RNA, antibodies to HIV I and HIV II and the p24 antigen, an early marker for infection.

All Better2Know's HIV tests use a blood sample to test for HIV.

Better2Know is the leading private provider of Sexual Health testing services around the globe. We will get you a clinic appointment or home testing kit quickly and deliver fast and accurate results for your peace of mind. If you are concerned about your sexual health please visit our website www.better2know.com to book an appointment or purchase your test with us today.

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