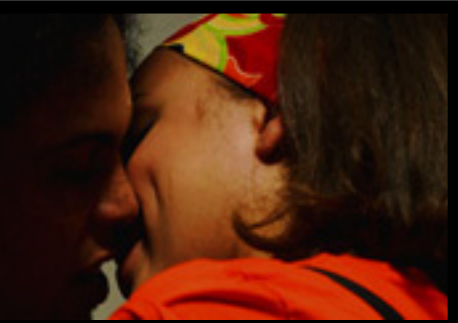


HIV AND AIDS

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It can lead to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), which damages the body's defence system so that it cannot fight off certain infections.



		<p>Woman's sexual organs (front)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1 Ovaries</td> <td>4 Cervix</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Fallopian tubes</td> <td>5 Vagina</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Womb</td> <td>6 Entrance to vagina</td> </tr> </table>	1 Ovaries	4 Cervix	2 Fallopian tubes	5 Vagina	3 Womb	6 Entrance to vagina						
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		<p>Woman's sexual organs (side)</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1 Ovary</td> <td>6 Vagina</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Womb</td> <td>7 Anus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Fallopian tubes</td> <td>8 Cervix</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 Bladder</td> <td>9 Clitoris</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 Urethra</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1 Ovary	6 Vagina	2 Womb	7 Anus	3 Fallopian tubes	8 Cervix	4 Bladder	9 Clitoris	5 Urethra			
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		<p>Men's sexual organs</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1 Scrotum</td> <td>7 Urethra</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Testicle</td> <td>8 Penis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Vas deferens</td> <td>9 Foreskin</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 Seminal vesicle</td> <td>10 Glans</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 Bladder</td> <td>11 Anus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 Prostate gland</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1 Scrotum	7 Urethra	2 Testicle	8 Penis	3 Vas deferens	9 Foreskin	4 Seminal vesicle	10 Glans	5 Bladder	11 Anus	6 Prostate gland	
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SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Most people with HIV look and feel healthy for a long time, so you can't tell who has the virus just by looking at them.
- There is no available vaccine against HIV.
- There is still no cure for HIV although anti-retroviral drugs have been developed, which mean that some people can stay well for longer.
- These don't suit everybody.

HIV AND AIDS

GETTING IT

There are four main ways to get HIV:

- By having vaginal, anal or oral sex without a condom with someone who has HIV.
- By using needles, syringes or other drug injecting or tattooing equipment that is infected with HIV.
- From a woman with HIV to her baby (before or during birth) and by breastfeeding.
- By receiving infected blood, blood products or donated organs as part of medical treatment in a country where these are not tested. In the UK all blood, blood products and donated organs are tested for HIV.

You cannot get HIV through:

- Kissing, touching, hugging, shaking hands.
- Sharing crockery and cutlery.
- Coughing or sneezing.
- Contact with toilet seats.
- Insect or animal bites.
- Eating food prepared by someone with HIV.

TESTING, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

HIV can be diagnosed by a simple blood test, which checks your blood for antibodies to HIV. Your body produces antibodies in response to being infected with a virus. Sexual health (GUM) clinics offer free HIV testing and screening for other infections.

All information is strictly confidential.

You can go to any clinic, anywhere in the country. You don't have to use a local one and you don't have to be referred by your GP.

HIV AND AIDS

TESTING, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT (cont')

What if the result is HIV negative?

This means that no antibodies were found in your blood, which usually means that you do not have HIV. It can however, take the body up to three months to produce antibodies (the window period). If you think you have been at risk less than three months ago, you might need to have a repeat test. Remember - even if your test result is negative, you can still become infected in the future if you put yourself at risk.

What if the result is HIV positive?

This means that you have HIV antibodies in your blood and are HIV positive. Being HIV positive means you will need to look at ways of taking particular care of your own health. It also means that you can pass on the virus to others. So:

- Always use a condom for vaginal, oral or anal sex.
- If you inject drugs, do not let other people use your equipment.
- Remember that you cannot pass on the virus through everyday social contact.
- Avoid sharing toothbrushes or shaving equipment.

You will be able to discuss the test result with a health care professional such as a doctor, nurse or health adviser. They can talk to you about the possible ways of helping you decide who to and who not to tell. This may include current and past sexual partners.

There are treatments that can help delay the onset of AIDS and you can discuss whether or when to start these with your consultant. This decision is important as the effectiveness of the treatment depends on starting it at the right time.

If you think you may have HIV, contact your local sexual health (GUM) clinic and make an appointment. It's easy and completely confidential.

HIV AND AIDS

SEX AND STAYING SAFE

What is safer sex?

Any sex that does not allow an infected partner's blood, semen, pre-ejaculatory (pre-cum) fluid, or fluid from the vagina to get inside the other partner's body. Some kinds of sexual activity - such as kissing or masturbation - carry no risk of HIV.

What are the riskiest kinds of sex?

Vaginal and anal sex without a condom carry the highest risk. HIV can be passed on to either partner - male or female, gay or straight - during penetrative sex (where the penis enters the vagina or anus) and less commonly oral sex without a condom.

How safe is oral sex?

There is some risk from oral sex (from mouth to the genitals or genitals to mouth), but it is less risky than vaginal or anal sex without a condom. The risk can be further reduced by:

- Avoiding getting semen or pre-ejaculatory fluid (pre-cum) in the mouth, particularly if there are any cuts, sores or ulcers in the mouth.
- Avoid oral sex with a woman when she is having her period.
- Using a condom for oral sex with a man.
- Using a dental dam for oral sex with a woman.

For more information on sexual health (including HIV), call the Sexual Health Line free (from the UK) on 0800 567 123, textphone (for people with hearing impairments) 0800 521 361 or phone your local NHS sexual health clinic.