
AIDS

AIDS can happen to **YOU!** It doesn't matter who you are, but what you **DO**.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is about getting sick . . . and dying. That's the bottom line. AIDS is a killer and there is no cure. More than 18,000 people with AIDS still die each year in the U.S. And each year, another 56,300 Americans become infected with HIV.*

AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus.) HIV may live in the human body for many years before a person becomes sick. HIV gets into a person's bloodstream and attacks the body's immune system, leaving the body defenseless and unable to fight off infections and diseases. When a person becomes so sick and the body cannot fight off infections and diseases, the person then has AIDS.

It's important to know the facts about HIV and AIDS

- Fact:** Over 1 million people are living with HIV in the U.S. Of those people, 21% do not know they are infected.*
- Fact:** AIDS is one of the Top 10 causes of death among people age 15-24 in the U.S.
- Fact:** HIV can be spread by sexual contact with an infected person. HIV can be spread from blood to blood contact, or by sharing needles and syringes. Babies of women who have been infected with HIV may be born with the infection because it can be transmitted from the mother of the baby before or during birth, and through breast-feeding.
- Fact:** HIV is not spread by casual contact in schools, at parties, in swimming pools, stores or the workplace.
- Fact:** You can't get HIV/AIDS by hugging, shaking hands, or simply being near a person who is infected with the virus. No person has ever been infected by an insect.

Doctors don't yet know all the answers. They do understand how people get AIDS and what **YOU** can do to avoid infection.

HIV/AIDS can be prevented.

By making smart choices about your personal behavior, you could save your life.

How can you protect yourself?

Most people get HIV/AIDS from drug use or sexual contact. So it's pretty simple to be safe:

- **DON'T DO DRUGS.** Stay away from drugs, especially needle drugs and the people who use them.

NEVER share a needle with anyone. **STAY AWAY FROM DRUGS.**



* Centers for Disease Control 2010 estimates.

• **REMEMBER** it's **OK** to say **NO** to sex. Not having sexual intercourse is the surest way to avoid HIV/AIDS. Take charge of your decisions about sex and learn to respect your own feelings.

• **ABSTINENCE** – not having sex – is the **ONLY RISK-FREE** way.

But . . . if sex becomes part of your life, use latex condoms. During ANY kind of sex, use latex condoms. Condoms are not foolproof. Condoms are not 100% safe.

The only way that is 100% safe is abstinence - not having sex.

But if a person is going to have sex, a **latex condom** can help to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS when used properly from start to finish.

Learn the facts about AIDS. Ask questions. Learn all you can. It may make a difference in **YOUR** life.

For more information, call:

AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (715) 355-6867

Long-distance callers may call toll-free. . . (800) 551-3311

Provides HIV/AIDS education and support services, abstinence education, and rapid HIV/AIDS testing.

Act Smart: HIV/AIDS Prevention (715) 842-2156

American Red Cross program helps develop skills needed to practice and maintain healthy behaviors that will eliminate or reduce the risk of contracting HIV.

For HIV/AIDS testing, call:

Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinic (715) 261-1900

Long-distance callers may call toll-free. . . (800) 236-0153

Ask for the Health Department for an explanation of how to get confidential low-cost AIDS testing.

Family Planning Health Services (715) 675-5395

Long-distance callers may call toll-free. . . (800) 246-5743

Provides confidential AIDS testing by appointment on an ability-to-pay basis.

For more information about AIDS, search the **AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin** website at www.arcw.org, the **U. S. Department of Health and Human Services** website at www.aidsinfo.nih.gov, or the **Centers for Disease Control** website at www.cdc.gov.

For more information about other **SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES**, see page 53.