

or tattooing. When injecting drugs or medicine, clean or unused needles should be used. Used, dirty needles should NOT be shared. Some cities offer needle exchange programs, where you can exchange your used needles for new ones.

### **IF YOU ARE LIVING WITH HIV YOU CAN PREVENT SPREADING THE DISEASE TO OTHERS.**

- Do not breast feed.
- Get pre-natal care and treatment.
- Tell your sexual partners you are HIV infected before you engage in sex. Practice safe sex (use condoms and dental dams).
- Do not share needles for body piercing, injections or tattooing.

### **LEARN HOW TO USE A MALE CONDOM CORRECTLY!**

- Open the condom package with your fingers NOT YOUR TEETH.
- Pinch the tip of the condom to ensure there is no air caught in the condom.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

**riht@uscridc.org**  
**U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants**  
**1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW**  
**Suite 200**  
**Washington, DC 20036**  
**Phone: 202 • 347 • 3507**  
**Fax: 202 • 347 • 7177**  
**www.refugees.org**

- Roll the condom down the ERECT penis all of the way. If you cannot roll the condom down, you should throw the condom away and begin again with a new condom.
- After sex (intercourse), hold the bottom of the condom soon after ejaculation and withdraw the penis.
- Dispose of the used condom in the trash and wash penis.
- DO NOT REUSE CONDOMS.
- Practice before you need to use a condom.

**For more information about HIV/AIDS services in your community, please call 1-800-342-2437.**

**For more information about HIV on the Internet, please visit:**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.hivpositive.com](http://www.hivpositive.com)

[www.thebody.com](http://www.thebody.com)

*www*

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## **What is HIV?**



## BASIC FACTS ABOUT HIV /AIDS

**HIV**—Human Immune Deficiency Virus (HIV) is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). HIV causes the body to lose its natural protection against disease, even common diseases like colds. A doctor says a person has AIDS when their body has weakened and can no longer fight off certain diseases.

HIV infection is preventable! People infected with HIV can live a very long and healthy life with good medical care and early detection.

## HOW IS HIV TRANSMITTED?

HIV is transmitted through the blood, semen, breast milk, and vaginal fluids of people with HIV. HIV can be passed from one person to another during sexual acts, sharing needles for injections, body piercing (including ears) or tattooing (body art), childbirth, and breast-feeding.

In the US, blood given for transfusions is tested, so that there is no risk in giving or receiving blood in a medical setting. You cannot get HIV from giving blood.

The chances of a mother passing HIV to her child during childbirth can be lowered a lot with pre-natal care and HIV treatment. It is important that pregnant women get tested for HIV to prevent mothers passing HIV to their babies.

## TAKING AN HIV TEST

You cannot tell if a person is infected with HIV. People may look healthy, they may be fit or fat, and they may be free of sores and bruises and still be infected with HIV and able to pass the disease

to others. The only way to know for sure if a person has HIV is to get an HIV test.

HIV testing is simple and easy. In most cities, there are free or low cost HIV testing sites. HIV tests are either a mouth swab or finger prick. Test results can be returned in as little as 20 minutes. In most cities, testing is offered as either confidential or anonymous.

*Confidential testing:* Records the name of the person being tested and reports those names privately to public health officials (such as State Health departments).

*Anonymous testing:* Does not require a name to be used. Instead a code is used that is the only one of its kind to identify the person. This means that the person receiving the test is the only one who can tell anyone the results.

You cannot become infected with HIV by:

- Casual contact
- Shaking hands
- Hugging, kissing
- Coughing, sneezing
- Giving blood
- Using swimming pools
- Sitting on toilet seats
- Sharing bed linen
- Sharing forks, spoons, chopsticks, knives, plates, bowls or glasses
- Mosquito or other insect bites



## HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

### No Risk of HIV

- Abstinence (do not have sex with another person)

If you **and** your sex partner have been tested for HIV within the past 6 months AND:

- Have both tested negative for the HIV virus
- **Only** have sex with each other
- Do not share needles for injections, body piercing, or tattooing

### Some Risk of HIV

- Practice safer sex
- Practice safer needle use

## WHAT IS SAFER SEX?

Safer sex blocks direct contact with semen, vaginal fluids, and blood through the correct use of latex condoms (male and female) and dental dams (latex barriers).

Before having sex:

- Talk to your partner about safer sex.
- Practice using latex condoms (male and female) to learn to use them correctly before having sex.
- Do not have sex after using drugs or alcohol.
- Do use water-based lubricants (NO Vaseline or petroleum jelly lubricants).

Birth control pills, birth control shots, birth control rings, birth control patches, and birth control sponges do not prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. A latex condom (male or female) should still be used.

## WHAT IS SAFER NEEDLE USE?

Safer needle use prevents direct contact with blood through the use of clean and unused needles for injecting drugs, medicines, body piercing