

TIPS for TEENS

HIV

THE TRUTH ABOUT HIV

**SLANG: THE VIRUS/
HI-FIVE/THE BUG/
THE DEADLIEST CATCH**

GET THE FACTS

HIV AFFECTS YOUR BODY. The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) weakens your body's immune system, making it less able to fight against diseases and infections. The virus is spread through contact with certain bodily fluids, including blood, semen, pre-seminal fluid, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk from a person with HIV.¹ The virus can also be spread through high-risk drug use such as injecting drugs and sharing equipment used with drug injection.

HIV AFFECTS YOUTH—THOUGH MANY YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THEY HAVE HIV. In 2017, the number of youth ages 13 to 24 who received an HIV diagnosis reached 8,164.² However, this age group is the least likely to know their HIV status: In 2015, an estimated 51 percent of those living with HIV were unaware they had been infected.³

HIV IS PREVENTABLE. Abstaining from sex, using protection during sex, and avoiding drug use can help prevent HIV infection. There also are HIV prevention medicines such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for people who don't have HIV but who are at high risk of becoming infected. Among people who inject drugs, PrEP reduces their risk of HIV infection by more than 70 percent when taken daily.⁴

HIV IS TREATABLE. Although there is currently no cure for HIV, with proper treatment, a person can live a long and otherwise healthy life with HIV and prevent it from progressing to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), the most advanced stage of HIV infection. Taking HIV antiretroviral therapy (ART) as prescribed can lower a person's HIV levels to become undetectable, allowing them to live longer, healthier lives while also reducing their risk of transmitting HIV.⁵

? Q&A

Q. CAN I GET HIV FROM TOUCHING A PERSON OR AN OBJECT?

A. NO. HIV isn't an airborne virus, and you can't get HIV from shaking hands or hugging a person who is infected. You also can't get it from touching objects used by a person with HIV.⁶

Q. CAN I GET HIV IF I USE DRUGS?

A. Injection drug use is a leading cause of transmission.⁷ Also, alcohol and drugs can affect your judgment, leading you to engage in risky behavior such as having unprotected sex. The best way to reduce your risk of HIV is to avoid using drugs and other substances.⁸

Q. WHO IS AT THE HIGHEST RISK FOR GETTING HIV?

A. While those who use IV drugs or have unprotected sex are at greater risk, HIV can affect anyone regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender, or age.⁹

THE BOTTOM LINE:

HIV is harmful but preventable. Talk to your parents, a doctor, a counselor, a teacher, or another adult you trust if you have questions.

LEARN MORE:

Get the latest on how HIV affects the brain and body at hiv.gov.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HIV, CONTACT:

SAMHSA

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

(English and Español)

TTY 1-800-487-4889

www.samhsa.gov

store.samhsa.gov



SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration



BEFORE YOU RISK IT!

1

KNOW THE RISKS. Because the effects of drugs and alcohol use can result in poor judgment, their use can lead to risky behaviors that increase the chances of getting or transmitting an HIV infection, such as unprotected sex or sharing needles when injecting drugs. In 2017, 2,389 people who inject drugs were diagnosed with HIV.¹⁰

2

STAY INFORMED. Interactions between HIV medicines and illegal drugs can increase the risk of harmful side effects. In addition, drug and alcohol use can further harm a person with HIV by weakening their immune system and damaging their liver.¹¹

3

LOOK AROUND YOU. In 2017, 38,739 people were diagnosed with HIV in the U.S., and an estimated 1.1 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2015. Of those people, about 1 in 7 did not know they were infected.¹²



FIND HELP AND TREATMENT

For 24/7 free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish, call SAMHSA's National Helpline at:

1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)

or visit the SAMHSA Treatment Services Locator at findtreatment.gov

You also can visit the HIV Testing Sites & Care Services Locator at hiv.gov/locator to search for health centers and other service providers near you.

¹ National Institutes of Health (NIH). (2018). HIV/AIDS: The Basics. *AIDSinfo*. Retrieved from <https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv-aids/fact-sheets/19/45/hiv-aids-the-basics>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2019). HIV in the United States and Dependent Areas. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/statistics/overview/cdc-hiv-us-ataglance.pdf>

³ HIV.gov. (2019). U.S. Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics>

⁴ CDC. (2019). PrEP. *HIV Basics*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/prep.html>

⁵ CDC. (2018). HIV Treatment. *HIV Basics*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/livingwithhiv/treatment.html>

⁶ CDC. (2018). HIV Transmission. *HIV Basics*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/transmission.html>

⁷ CDC. (2018). Diagnoses of HIV Infection in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2017. *HIV Surveillance Report*, 29. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/library/reports/surveillance/cdc-hiv-surveillance-report-2017-vol-29.pdf>

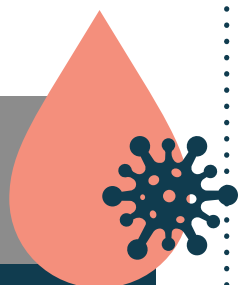
⁸ CDC. (2018). HIV Transmission. *HIV Basics*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/transmission.html>

⁹ HIV.gov. (2017). Who Is at Risk for HIV? Retrieved from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/about-hiv-and-aids/who-is-at-risk-for-hiv>

¹⁰ HIV.gov. (2019). U.S. Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics>

¹¹ NIH. (2018). HIV and Drug and Alcohol Users. *AIDSinfo*. Retrieved from <https://aidsinfo.nih.gov/understanding-hiv-aids/fact-sheets/25/84/hiv-and-drug-and-alcohol-users>

¹² HIV.gov. (2019). U.S. Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics>



MORE INFORMATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR FOR RESOURCES USED IN THIS

"TIPS for TEENS,"

visit store.samhsa.gov or call
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