

If you have any questions, please call your Nurse Care Manager at 1-800-832-0778.



We're here to help!



24 Hour Customer Service Line:  
1-800-832-0778



**WHAT IS AIDS?**

**WHAT IS HIV?**

## What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome. AIDS weakens the body's immune system. The immune system is what fights off illness in human beings. People with AIDS can get very serious diseases because their immune systems don't work right. Millions of people have been diagnosed with AIDS.



## What is HIV?

In 1983, scientists found the virus that causes AIDS. It's named Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). A virus is a small germ that can cause disease. HIV destroys a certain kind of blood cell: T-cells or CD4 cells. They are also called "helper cells." These helper cells make the immune system work properly. When a large number of them are destroyed, a person can develop AIDS.

## What is the Difference Between HIV and AIDS?

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. You can't develop AIDS unless you've been infected with HIV. People with HIV are said to have AIDS when their T-cell count is less than 200. You can also be diagnosed with AIDS if you have HIV and you have any "AIDS-defining condition" like tuberculosis.

We can prevent AIDS by preventing and treating HIV.

## What Happens When You Are Infected With HIV?

If HIV enters your body, you can get infected. HIV can hide in your body for years without showing any symptoms. If you have HIV, you can transmit it to other people, even if you don't have any symptoms. The only way to know if you are infected with HIV is to get an HIV test.

People with HIV can develop many health problems. These can include pneumonia, cancer and damage to the nervous system. Some people develop these illnesses a year or two after being infected with HIV. Other people stay healthy for 10 years or more. These illnesses can signal the onset of AIDS, but early treatment of HIV can prevent them. This is one of the reasons why every person with HIV should be under a doctor's care.

## How Do You Get Infected With HIV?

You can be infected with HIV when the HIV virus enters your body. There are two main ways this happens:

- By having unprotected sex (vaginal, anal or oral) with a person who has HIV
- By sharing drug needles or syringes with a person who has HIV

Women who are infected with HIV can also pass it on to their babies during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.



# TAKE-A-QUIZ

**Do you know the facts about HIV infection and AIDS?**  
**Test your knowledge with this quiz!**

- 1 HIV can be spread through which of the following?  
**A.** Insect bites  
**B.** Everyday contact  
**C.** Sharing drug needles  
**D.** Sexual intercourse
- 2 You can tell if a person has HIV just by looking at them.  
**TRUE** **FALSE**
- 3 If you have HIV, you can transmit it to others from the moment you're infected.  
**TRUE** **FALSE**
- 4 Women with HIV can infect their babies during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding.  
**TRUE** **FALSE**
- 5 If you think you've been exposed to HIV, or if you have HIV, you should see a doctor regularly.  
**TRUE** **FALSE**

ANSWERS TO QUIZ:  
1. C and D 2. FALSE 3. TRUE  
4. TRUE 5. TRUE