

# HIV Infection and AIDS

(caused by human immunodeficiency virus or HIV)

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Early (weeks to months after exposure):

- Flu-like illness
- Swollen lymph nodes

Late (years after exposure):

- Persistent fevers
- Night sweats
- Prolonged diarrhea
- Unexplained weight loss
- Purple bumps on skin or inside mouth and nose
- Chronic fatigue
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Recurrent respiratory infections

Note: These symptoms are not specific for HIV and may have other causes. Most persons with HIV have no symptoms at all for several years.

## TRANSMISSION

HIV is spread by:

- Vaginal sex
- Oral sex
- Anal sex
- Sharing needles to inject drugs, body piercing or tattooing
- Contaminated blood products (rare)
- Infected mother to newborn at birth or through breastfeeding

HIV infection cannot be spread by:

- Shaking hands
- A social kiss
- Cups
- Animals
- Hugging
- Swimming pools
- Toilet seats
- Food
- Insects
- Coughing

## COMPLICATIONS

- HIV can spread to sex partners and persons sharing needles.
- There is no cure for HIV and without treatment most people eventually die from the disease.

HIV/AIDS and pregnancy

- HIV can be passed to unborn children from infected mother during pregnancy or childbirth.
- Infected mother may infect infant through breast milk.

## PREVENTION

- Avoiding vaginal, oral or anal sex is the best way to prevent STDs.
- Limit the number of sex partners.
- Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing the transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.
- Always use latex condoms during vaginal and anal sex.
- Use a latex condom for oral sex on a penis.
- Use a latex barrier (dental dam or condom cut in half) for oral sex on a vagina or anus.
- Limit or avoid use of drugs and alcohol.
- Don't share drug needles, cotton or cookers.
- Don't share needles for tattooing or piercing.
- Notify sex and needle-sharing partners immediately if HIV-infected.

## TESTING AND TREATMENT

- Tests are available to detect antibodies for HIV through physicians, STD clinics, and HIV counseling and testing sites.
- There is no cure for HIV/AIDS.
- Early diagnosis and treatment can prolong life for years.
- Medications and treatments are available to keep immune system working.
- Medications are available to treat AIDS-related illnesses.
- Medications are available for HIV infected pregnant women to greatly reduce the chance of infection of newborn.
- There are experimental drug trials testing new medications.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Minnesota Department of Health  
 STD and HIV Section  
 (651) 201-5414; (651) 201-5797 TTY  
[www.health.state.mn.us/hiv](http://www.health.state.mn.us/hiv)

Minnesota AIDS Project AIDSLine  
 (612) 373-AIDS (Metro)  
 1-800-248-AIDS (State)  
 (612) 373-2465 TTY (Metro)  
 1-888-820-2437 TTY (State)  
[www.mnaidsproject.org](http://www.mnaidsproject.org)

American Social Health Association (ASHA)  
[www.ashastd.org](http://www.ashastd.org)

CDC National STD and AIDS Hotlines  
 1-800-CDC-INFO; 1-888-232-6348 TTY  
[www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv)

