

WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS is a disease in which the immune system breaks down. People who have AIDS are likely to develop serious infections and cancers. These infections, called "opportunistic infections" are not usually seen in people whose immune system is intact.

WHAT IS HIV?

AIDS is caused by a virus known as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This virus is what destroys the immune system. HIV can also invade the central nervous system causing severe neurological problems.

WHO CAN GET HIV?

Anyone! HIV doesn't prefer one person over the next – it will infect any human being. HIV has affected gay men, lesbians, heterosexuals and bisexuals. It is found in all races, nationalities and age groups.

HOW IS HIV SPREAD?

HIV is spread through certain body fluids, mainly:

- Blood
- Semen
- Vaginal secretions
- Breast milk

HIV is spread by certain behaviors and/or situations:

- Sexual contact (anal, vaginal, oral)
- Sharing injection equipment
- Blood or its components
- Infected mother to infant

HIV is **not** spread by:

- Hugging
- Kissing

- Sharing eating utensils
- Sharing toilets or bathrooms
- Mosquitoes or other biting insects
- Drinking fountains
- Swimming pools

HOW LONG AFTER HIV INFECTION DOES A PERSON DEVELOP AIDS?

It can take up to 10 years after a person is infected with HIV to develop AIDS. Some people think they can tell who is infected by looking at a person. This is not true. An HIV-infected person can look perfectly normal and healthy. Also, anyone infected with HIV can infect another person. The person does not have to be sick or have AIDS to infect you.

WHO GET AIDS IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY?

Anyone can get AIDS. In Sacramento County, the AIDS cases have been categorized as follows:

Gay/Bisexual Men.	63%
Injection Drug Users.	14%
Gay/Bisexual/Injection Drug Users. . .	12%
Heterosexual Contacts.	8%
Risk not specified.	3%

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
White.	64%	4%
African American.	15%	5%
Hispanic.	9%	1%
Asian/PI.	1%	1%
Native American.	1%	1%

These numbers reflect all AIDS cases reported in Sacramento to date. The numbers do not illustrate the increasing numbers of HIV infection in Sacramento County, especially among heterosexual women of color.

IS THERE A TEST FOR AIDS?

There is a blood test which detects antibodies to HIV. Antibodies are made by your body to fight off infections. Presence of HIV antibodies means that a person has been infected with the virus that causes AIDS and can infect others. Antibodies against HIV can be detected from 2 weeks to 6 months after infection.

HOW CONTAGIOUS IS AIDS?

Casual contact, such as shaking hands, sharing eating utensils or using drinking fountains does **not** place one at risk for HIV infection. No cases have been reported in which HIV was transmitted through casual contact with an HIV-infected person. Although HIV has been found in saliva and tears, it is not present in sufficient quantities to result in transmission.

Some health care workers have become infected following accidental exposure, such as a needle stick. It is recommended that health care and laboratory workers follow universal precautions. Using universal precautions allows one to perform his/her job without being at increased risk for HIV infection.

WHAT ABOUT DONATING BLOOD?

You cannot get HIV or AIDS from donating blood. Each time someone donates blood, new & sterile needles and equipment are used.

The risk of getting HIV through a blood transfusion is small. Donated blood is tested for many infectious agents, including HIV, and if the blood is found to be infected, it is discarded and not used.



Can AIDS be prevented?

YES!! Communities and people like yourself can help prevent HIV/AIDS from spreading. To do this, you must be educated about how to protect yourself:

- Abstain from sex and injection drug use. This is the only way to be 100% sure you won't get HIV.
- Use a latex condom for vaginal or anal intercourse. Use a latex barrier (or plastic wrap) during oral sex.
- Do not share needles. It doesn't matter if you are using needles to shoot drugs, for tattooing or body piercing, for insulin, vitamins or steroid injections – **DON'T SHARE NEEDLES WITH ANYONE.** Also, avoid unprotected sexual contact with people who may share needles.
- Clean injection equipment with bleach and water.
- Avoid unprotected or unsafe activities with multiple partners or sex industry workers.
- Avoid having sex under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. These may alter your ability to make safer sexual decisions.
- Share this information with your friends, family and coworkers. The only way to prevent the spread of HIV is through education, and you can help.

Is there a cure for AIDS?

No! Some drugs, such as the "drug cocktail" or "triple-drug therapy" can inhibit reproduction of HIV and can lead to improved health in HIV infected individuals. These drugs do not "cure" the infected person of HIV. It is important to know that once you are infected with HIV, you are infected for life.

**Remember, it's not *who you are*, it's *what you do* that puts you at risk for HIV infection.
Protect yourself.**

For more information, call:

General Information:

Sacramento County
Department of Health & Human Services
AIDS Education and Prevention Unit
916-875-6022

Sacramento HIV Resource Line
1-888-259-4HIV (4448)

CDC National AIDS Hotline
English: 1-800-342-AIDS (2437)
Spanish: 1-800-344-7432
TDD/Deaf Access: 1-800-243-7889

HIV Antibody Testing:

Sacramento County
Department of Health & Human Services
Alternative Test Site (ATS)
916-874-7720

Medical Care:

Sacramento County
Department of Health & Human Services
Capital Medical Clinic
916-874-5302



FACTS ABOUT HIV/AIDS

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is an infectious agent that causes Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS was first reported in the United States in 1981. Since that time, more than 750,000 cases have been reported in the United States. California has reported more than 117,000 cases, with over 60% resulting in death. Sacramento County is 8th among all the counties in California, with 2800 reported cases of AIDS. In addition, there are hundreds of thousands of people in the United States who are HIV-infected – many of whom do not know it or currently show no symptoms of the disease.

This brochure describes in a question-and-answer format information about HIV/AIDS. This information includes answers to the following questions:

- ◆ What is AIDS?
- ◆ What is HIV?
- ◆ Who can get HIV?
- ◆ How is HIV spread?
- ◆ Who gets AIDS in Sacramento County?
- ◆ Is there a test for AIDS?
- ◆ How contagious is AIDS?
- ◆ What about donating blood?
- ◆ How can you protect yourself?
- ◆ Can AIDS be prevented?
- ◆ Is there a cure for AIDS?

This information is provided to you by the Sacramento County
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