

11- SO WHAT PRECAUTIONS CAN DRUG USERS TAKE TO AVOID GETTING INFECTED WITH HIV:

A. SAFE INJECTION PRACTICES

- Stop using drugs.
- Do not share needles and syringes, water or drug preparation equipment.
- Safely dispose of syringes after one use.



B. TAKE DRUG TREATMENT

It is available in **General hospital** Psychiatric unit/**specialized de-addiction centres** / Non governmental organizations(NGO'S) de-addiction **centres**.

C. PRACTICE SAFER SEX.

- By having a mutually faithful monogamous sexual relationship with an uninfected partner.
- Reduce the number of sexual partners-avoid multiple partners.
- Always have **protected/safer** sex with use of condom for vaginal, oral or anal sex..
- Use water based lubricants with condoms, if required
- Use spermicidal (birth control) foams and jellies along with condoms, not alone.
- Take treatment for **sexually transmitted diseases** (STD's) like syphilis, gonorrhoea or chancroid .



D.GET TESTED FOR HIV.

This has two vital benefits. **Firstly:** if you are HIV-infected, you can take necessary steps before symptoms appear, thereby potentially prolonging your life for many years **Secondly:** if you know you are infected, you can take all the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of HIV to others.

WHAT IS HIV TEST?

The ELISA (enzyme immunoassay) is the standard screening test used to detect the presence of antibodies to HIV. It should be used with a confirmatory test such as the Western blot. It is available at Voluntary counseling and confidential testing centres (VCCTC) of any District State AIDS Control Society on payment of a nominal amount .



How long after a possible exposure should I wait to get tested for HIV(Window Period)?

The usual range is within 3-6 months after the last possible exposure (**unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex or sharing needles**).

E.TAKE TREATMENT FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES(STD).

STD's multiply the risk of HIV transmission by ten as it causes some damage to the genital skin and mucous layer which facilitates the entry of virus in the body. Take treatment for symptoms such as painful urination, a discharge, smell, a rash or sores on their sex organs.

POINTS TO REMEMBER:-

- Take treatment for Drug abuse.
- Follow safe Injection practices and never share needles if you are a Injectable drug user.
- Avoid mixing alcohol or other drugs with sexual activities.
- Practice safe sex with use of condoms during vaginal, oral or anal sex.
- Abstain from casual and unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex.
- Be faithful to your partner.
- Avoid multiple partners.
- Get yourself tested for HIV if you are a drug user or have indulged in other high risk behaviour.
- Take immediate treatment for sexually transmitted diseases.

For Further Information Contact:
National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre,
All India Institute of Medical Sciences,
Kamla Nehru Nagar, Hapur Road,
Ghaziabad(U.P.)
Phone no: (95120)-2788974 - 977



FACTS ABOUT HIV-AIDS & DRUG ABUSE



Compiled by:

Dr Sonali Jhanjee, Assistant professor, A.I.I.M.S
Ms. A Chopra, Scientist, A.I.I.M.S

Published by

National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre,
All India Institute of Medical Science, A.I.I.M.S
Kamla Nehru Nagar, Ghaziabad.(U.P)
Phone no: (95120)-2788974 - 977

(2007)

1- WHAT IS HIV AND AIDS?

HIV is a virus. It is called the human immunodeficiency virus(HIV), which causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, or AIDS. It is of two types: HIV-1 and HIV-2.

2-HOW DOES HIV/AIDS HARM THE BODY?

HIV enters the human body and invades the immune system of humans and reduces the body's capacity and resistance to fight infections. Thus these immunodeficient people are much more vulnerable to a wide range of infections.

3-WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIV AND AIDS?

AIDS refers to the advanced stages of HIV infection, when various symptoms and infections associated with acquired deficiency of the immune system begin to appear like persistent severe diarrhea, fever, or pneumonia, or skin cancer. Thus, AIDS is a collection of sicknesses after HIV has made the body weak.

AIDS can take more than 8-10 years to develop after HIV infection. Hence, persons living with HIV can live symptom free life for years before any signs of illness (AIDS) appears.

The Sequence of events is:

Normal persons - HIV infection - AIDS Disease - Death.



4- IS HIV-AIDS CURABLE?

No, there is no cure for HIV/AIDS and it is a serious life-threatening disease. Progression of the disease can be slowed down but cannot be stopped completely, with drugs known as **Antiretroviral drugs**.

5-HOW DOES HIV INFECTION SPREAD?

HIV infection spreads from person to person only in specific ways via infected blood, semen or vaginal secretions. HIV spreads by:

1. Having Unsafe/unprotected (having sex without condoms) sexual relations.
2. Getting transfusion through HIV infected blood and blood products



3. Infected or used needles/syringes.

4. From HIV positive mother to her baby either during pregnancy, delivery, or breast feeding.

6- WHAT ARE THE WAYS IN WHICH HIV/AIDS CANNOT BE TRANSMITTED?

HIV is not transmitted by day-to-day contact in social settings, schools or in the workplace. That is:

- Having ordinary social or casual contact (sitting, standing, touching, hugging, dancing)with someone living with HIV or AIDS
- Sharing food, dishes, or eating utensils with someone living with HIV or AIDS.
- Coughing, sneezing through the air we breathe.
- Shaking hands with someone living with HIV or AIDS
- Sitting on toilet seats.
- Insect or mosquito bite.
- Common use of telephones, pens, typewriters, computer machines and books etc. with a HIV positive person.
- Living or working with an HIV-infected person in an office, factory etc.



Shaking hands



Sharing combs



Eating from the same plate



Hugging



Towels or clothes



Sharing latrines or toilets



Sitting close to other people



Mosquitoes, bedbugs, other insects or animals.

7- WHO CAN GET AIDS?

Anyone (rich-poor, male-female, young-old, children-adults etc) can become infected with HIV. But certain behaviours places people at very **high risk** of acquiring HIV- AIDS who **should go in for HIV testing**.

8-WHAT IS HIGH-RISK BEHAVIOUR?

- 1) Using drugs(esp. by the Injectable route)
- 2) Having multiple sexual partners.
- 3) Having sex with sex workers.
- 4) Having sex with persons other than their life partner without using condom
- 5) Men having sex with other men.
- 6) Presence of sexually transmitted diseases.



9- HOW DOES DRUG ABUSE PREDISPOSE TO HIV-AIDS?

First: The most common method of transmission is by **sharing contaminated (infected with blood secretions of a HIV positive person) injection equipment** like needles and syringes among people who inject drugs.

Second: There is sexual transmission of virus between those who inject drugs and their sexual partners.

Third: Even non injecting use of drugs like alcohol, heroin, cannabis can lead to high risk sexual behaviour as drug use can interfere with judgment about sexual (and other) behaviour.

Fourth:HIV may be transmitted from a **addicted** mother who is HIV positive to her child during pregnancy, delivery or childbirth.

10-WHY IS INJECTING DRUGS A RISK FOR HIV?

"Direct syringe sharing"/ sharing drug equipment (or "works") carries a high risk of HIV transmission through:

- 1- Using blood-contaminated syringes to prepare drug
- 2- Reusing water;
- 3- Reusing bottle caps, spoons, or other containers ("spoons" and "cookers") used to dissolve drugs in water and to heat drug solutions
- 4- Reusing small pieces of cotton or cigarette filters ("cottons") used to filter out particles that could block the needle.
- 5- "Street sellers" of syringes may repackage used syringes and sell them as sterile syringes.