

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of HIV are different and vary according to the stage of the infection.

The 3 stages of the disease are Acute HIV infection, Clinical latency, AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

1. Acute HIV: Some individuals can experience no symptoms or flu-like illness. The symptoms are fever, headache, rash, sore throat, chills, night sweats, muscle pain, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, and mouth ulcers.
2. Clinical latency: In this stage, people may not have any symptoms.
3. AIDS : The symptoms are rapid weight loss, fever or profuse night sweats, fatigue, prolonged swelling of the lymph nodes in the armpits, groin or neck, persistent diarrhoea for more than 1 week, sores of the mouth anus or genitals, cough, respiratory infection (Pneumonia),(tuberculosis). Red, brown, pink or purple spots on/or under the skin, or inside the mouth, nose. Neurologic disorders: depression, memory loss. In these stages, people can develop cancer, severe infections or another clinical manifestation.



Spread love, not HIV

TRANSMISSION

HIV can be transmitted by direct contact with certain body fluids from a person with the infection, who has a detectable viral load. The fluids are blood, semen, vaginal fluids, rectal fluids, breast milk.

To get the infection, these infected fluids must enter to the bloodstream through a mucous membrane (found in the vagina, rectum, mouth, tip of the penis), open sores or cuts or by direct injection.

HIV can be spread through specific activities:

- Having vaginal or anal sex with a person who has the infection, without using a condom. (Anal sex is riskier than vaginal sex).
- Sharing injection drug equipment such needles.
- From mother to child during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding.
- To prick with an HIV contaminated needle or other sharp objects. (health care workers)
- Receiving blood transfusion, blood products or organ/tissue transplants that are contaminated with HIV(rare)

RECOMMENDATION

Reducing Risk of Transmission

- Use condoms (female and male condoms).
- Reduce the number of sexual partners.
- If you are sexually active, it is recommended to get tested at least once a year.
- If you are HIV-negative and your partner is HIV-positive, encourage your partner to take the treatment for HIV infection.

- Abstinence is the only 100% effective way to prevent HIV.
- Do not share needles, syringes and other injecting equipment with anyone.
- Avoid accidental needle stick injuries, especially among health workers
- All pregnant women should be tested for HIV.
- Medical male circumcision reduces the risk of heterosexually acquired HIV infection in men.

HIV Diagnosis

No single HIV test can provide HIV-diagnosis.

Serological tests, such as rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) or enzyme immunoassays (EIAs), detect the absence or presence of antibodies to HIV and/or HIVp24 antigen.

It is important for the HIV diagnosis, that these tests are used in a combination and a specific order.

It is recommended to retest all people initially diagnosed as HIV-Positive before they start the treatment to rule out any potential testing or reporting error.

Tuberculosis is the most common illness among people with HIV infection. Fatal if undetected or untreated. Tuberculosis screening is recommended if you have an HIV infection.

Treatment:

The HIV infection can be treated by a combination of ART (antiretroviral therapy) consisting of 3 or more ARV drugs. ARV does not cure the HIV infection but suppresses viral replication and allows the immune system to strengthen and regain the capacity to fight against the infections.

Nowadays, thanks to the improvements in the effectiveness of ART, people with HIV infection who are diagnosed early and continue taking the ART, can keep the virus suppressed and live long and healthy lives.

There is no vaccine for the HIV.