

Supplemental Lesson

What Is HIV?



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What Is HIV?

H = human

I = immunodeficiency

V = virus

Learning About HIV

HIV is a virus that affects the body's ability to fight infections. This makes it much easier for people who have untreated HIV to get sick. But there are only a few ways a person can get HIV.

How Do People Get HIV?

HIV is passed in certain kinds of body fluids. If a person has HIV, the virus is in these fluids from their body. HIV can be passed to other people through:

- **Blood.** HIV can be passed if blood with HIV from one person's body gets into another person's body. This can happen during pregnancy and birth when a parent's blood is shared with the baby. It can also happen if a person gets stuck with a needle with blood that contains HIV on it. Some people who use needles to inject medicines or other drugs have gotten HIV in this way.
- **Sex.** HIV can be passed in certain body fluids when people have sex with each other. These include semen, the fluid that carries sperm out of the penis, and fluid found in the vagina.
- **Breast milk.** A parent who has HIV can pass the virus to the baby through breast milk when nursing.

HIV is NOT found in saliva (spit), pee or sweat. It is not passed by coughing or sneezing. It is not passed by holding hands or sharing forks, spoons or drinking cups. It can't be passed by mosquito or other insect bites.

Keep Yourself from Getting HIV

There are medicines that can help people living with HIV stay healthy and prevent them from passing HIV to others. But there is still no cure for HIV. So it's important to know how to protect yourself from getting it.

- Don't touch other people's blood.
 - Let others wash their own cuts and scrapes.
 - Have other people press on their own wounds to stop bleeding.
 - Let other people put on their own band-aids.
- Never pick up or touch needles. Needles that have been used to inject medicines or drugs could contain HIV.
- Wait to do any sexual activities. This is the surest way to prevent HIV from being passed through body fluids during sex.

How Do People Get HIV?

HIV can be passed to other people through:

- Blood
- Sex
- Breast milk

HIV is NOT passed by:

- Saliva (spit), pee or sweat
- Coughing or sneezing
- Holding hands
- Sharing forks, spoons or drinking cups
- Insect bites

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Keep Yourself from Getting HIV

- **Don't touch other people's blood.**
- **Never pick up, touch or share needles.**
- **Wait to do any sexual activities.**

Name _____

What I Know About HIV

Directions: Think about what you learned about HIV, then answer the questions.

1. What body system does HIV affect?

2. How does HIV affect the body?

3. What are two ways that people can get HIV?

4. What are two ways you can keep yourself from getting HIV?

5. Imagine that someone in your class has a family member who is living with HIV. Your friend thinks this means it isn't safe to be around this classmate. What would you say to your friend to help them understand that this isn't true?
