

# Lesson 7

## Healthy behavior

Preventing HIV (human immunodeficiency virus).

## Health terms

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome)

condom

diagnosis

HIV (human immuno-deficiency virus)

immune system

injection drugs

lymph nodes

monogamy

polyurethane

PEP

PrEP

serial monogamy

virus

## Student Journal HIV Facts

### Journal entry

**A sexually transmitted infection (STI) is an infection that is passed from one person to another during sex.**

Write at least 3 things you know about STIs. Be sure one of these things includes the surest way to prevent STIs.

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### Learning about HIV

HIV stands for:

AIDS stands for:

HIV lives in:

HIV damages:

(continued)

# Lesson 7

## Student Journal HIV Facts *(continued)*

Learning about HIV <i>(continued)</i>
Ways HIV is transmitted
Ways HIV is NOT transmitted
Treatment is important because
Protecting yourself from HIV

# HIV Facts

## What is HIV?

HIV stands for *human immunodeficiency virus*. It is the virus that causes AIDS. AIDS stands for *acquired immune deficiency syndrome*.

HIV lives in semen, vaginal fluids, blood and breast milk of a person living with HIV. It can be passed from one person to another through these infected fluids.

HIV damages the body's *immune system*. Over time, the body can no longer fight off other diseases and infections.

## How does HIV affect the immune system?

The immune system helps protect the body from illness and disease. When a person gets sick—for example, with a common cold or the flu—the immune system helps fight off the infection, so the body can get well again.

If it is not treated, HIV weakens and can destroy a person's immune system. A person living with HIV may be diagnosed with AIDS if the immune system has become so weak that it can no longer fight off certain common illnesses. These are illnesses that usually don't infect healthy people. But when a person is living with HIV, the germs that cause these illnesses take advantage of the person's weakened immune system to cause serious and life-threatening harm.

There are medicines that will help slow the progress of the virus. When people living with HIV can get health care and follow a treatment plan, they can stay healthy for a very long time

## How does a person get HIV?

Because HIV lives in semen, vaginal fluids, blood and breast milk, it can be passed if any of these fluids from a person living with HIV gets into another person's body. This can happen in several ways.

HIV can be transmitted:

- During vaginal, anal or, rarely, oral sex
- By sharing needles and equipment to inject drugs, steroids or vitamins
- By sharing needles used for tattoos and body piercing
- From a mother to her baby during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding

Pregnant women with HIV can take medicines to significantly lower the chances of passing HIV to the fetus in the uterus or to the baby during and after birth. There are also medicines people who are at risk for HIV can take to lower their chances of infection.

There are a number of ways people can protect themselves from HIV. The only 100% effective way is to be sexually abstinent—choose not to do any sexual activity that could put you at risk—and to never share needles for any reason.

People can take steps to lower their risks if they are sexually active by always using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier when having sex. There are also medicines available called PrEP and PEP that can help protect people from HIV if they are at risk.

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# HIV Facts *(continued)*

## Is it safe to be around someone with HIV?

You can't get HIV from touching someone or from everyday contact or activities. So there is no risk and it is very safe to be friends with someone who is living with HIV.

HIV is **not** transmitted by:

- Donating blood
- Shaking hands, hugging, kissing or sharing food
- Toilet seats, towels, drinking glasses or eating utensils
- Tears, saliva, sweat or urine
- Mosquitoes or other insects

## What happens when a person gets HIV?

When they get treatment people who are living with HIV can live long and healthy lives. A person living with HIV may look and feel well for a long time. They may not even know they have HIV. The only way to know for sure is to get tested.

People may have flu-like symptoms when they are first infected with HIV. These may last from a few days to a few weeks. They may not notice other symptoms for years. Many people in the early stages of HIV have no symptoms. But even without symptoms, a person living with HIV can pass it to others. This can happen through unprotected sex, by sharing needles, or from mother to baby.

Without treatment, as HIV slowly damages more of the immune system, people may have fever, chills, a rash, sweating at night, achy muscles, a sore throat, swollen lymph nodes and sores in the mouth. As untreated HIV progresses, the person may get sick more often. A person living with untreated HIV is diagnosed with AIDS when their immune

system can no longer fight off certain kinds of diseases. These diseases eventually make the person very ill.

In addition to the health consequences, people living with HIV also face emotional and social consequences. They have to learn to live with a chronic disease. They may have to take medicines many times a day. They have to tell any potential sexual partners that they have HIV, and be sure to always use latex or polyurethane condoms if they have sex. And, sometimes, people with HIV still face discrimination and misunderstanding from others who don't understand how HIV works.

## Why are testing and treatment important?

The earlier people find out they have HIV and get treatment, the healthier they will stay. This is why it is so important for people who are sexually active to be tested for HIV. They can protect their sex partners and others from becoming infected when they know their HIV status and get treatment.

There is no cure yet for HIV, but there are medicines that can keep people who are living with HIV healthy for many years. Treatment with a combination of medicines called ART (antiretroviral therapy) can help stop the virus from growing and damaging the immune system. So the person stays stronger and healthier longer. It can also reduce the amount of virus in the person's blood and other body fluids. This lowers their chances of passing HIV to others.

People who are partners with a person living with HIV, or who may not know their partner's HIV status, can take a medicine to help protect themselves. This medicine is called PrEP and it needs to be taken once a day.

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# HIV Facts *(continued)*

## How can people protect themselves from HIV?

Because there is no cure for HIV, it is very important for people to know how to protect themselves from it, and for people who have HIV to get health care and follow a treatment plan.

- **Get tested.** The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested regularly, especially if you are sexually active or are using drugs. People who test positive for HIV can get treatment to help protect their health and lower the chances of passing HIV to others.
- **Never share needles.** Don't share needles for any reason, including tattooing or piercing.
- **Be sexually abstinent.** Abstinence, or not doing any sexual activity that could transmit HIV or other STIs, is the 100% sure way for young people to protect themselves from getting HIV from sex.
- **Use condoms.** People who are sexually active can use latex or polyurethane condoms correctly every time they have sex to help protect themselves. Reducing the number of sexual partners can also lower their risk.
- **PrEP.** People who are in a relationship with someone who is living with HIV or who are at risk for HIV can help protect themselves by taking HIV medicines every day. There is also a treatment called **PEP** that can help someone who thinks they may have been exposed to HIV avoid infection.



# What I Learned About HIV

**Directions:** Use what you learned today to answer the questions.

① What are the 3 ways a person can get HIV?

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② What are at least 3 symptoms of untreated HIV?

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③ What are the consequences of HIV (physical, emotional, social)?

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④ What is the surest 100% effective way to avoid HIV and why?

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⑤ Why is it safe to be friends with someone who has HIV?

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## Self-Check

- ☐ I listed 3 ways a person can get HIV.
- ☐ I listed at least 3 symptoms of untreated HIV.
- ☐ I described consequences of HIV, including what happens to the body over time.
- ☐ I explained the surest way to avoid HIV and why.
- ☐ I explained why it is safe to be around someone with HIV.

