

# HIV Education Fact Sheet



## HIV/AIDS

- Fact:** HIV is not the same as AIDS.
- Fact:** HIV tests are reliable.
- Fact:** HIV cannot be cured.
- Fact:** There is no vaccine to prevent HIV.
- Fact:** People with HIV should start HIV medicine right away.
- Fact:** You cannot know if your partner has HIV unless he or she is tested.
- Fact:** Women can give HIV to men.
- Fact:** A pregnant woman with HIV can lower the chance of passing HIV to her unborn baby to less than 1%.
- Fact:** Women of all ages, races and ethnicities, and sexual orientations can get HIV.
- Fact:** You can get HIV from sharing needles or getting tattoos or body piercings.
- Fact:** HIV is not spread by mosquitoes, sweat, tears, pools, or casual contact.






## HIV Epidemiology

- At year-end 2019, a total of 52,004 persons were living with diagnosed HIV (PLWDH) in LAC, and 99.9% of these were aged  $\geq 13$  years. Among children aged  $<13$  years, newly diagnosed HIV remains low, but not within target for elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Latest estimates approximate that there were approximately 1,700 persons aged  $\geq 13$  years newly infected with HIV in 2017. These infections represented new HIV infections acquired that year that may or may not have been diagnosed.
- In 2018, 1,660 persons aged  $\geq 13$  years were newly diagnosed with HIV infection, and approximately one-third of these were identified early in HIV disease progression based on CD4 counts within 1 month of HIV diagnosis. These findings suggest that a substantial number of newly infected persons remain undiagnosed and at high risk of transmitting to others due to high levels of HIV viral load.
- Among the estimated 57,700 persons aged  $\geq 13$  years living with HIV at year-end 2017, approximately 11% or 6,400 persons were unaware of their infection.

We are here to help, visit [eisnerhealth.org/hiv-ed](https://eisnerhealth.org/hiv-ed).

For more information call or text: Keyari Badon, HIV Community Health Educator (213) 588-1942.



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## FAQs

### What is HIV?

- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).
- There is currently no effective cure. Once people get HIV, they have it for life.

### Where did HIV come from?

- HIV infection in humans came from a type of chimpanzee in Central Africa.
- The chimpanzee version of the virus (called simian immunodeficiency virus, or SIV) was probably passed to humans when humans hunted these chimpanzees for meat and came in contact with their infected blood.
- Studies show that HIV may have jumped from chimpanzees to humans as far back as the late 1800s.
- Over decades, HIV slowly spread across Africa and later into other parts of the world. We know that the virus has existed in the United States since at least the mid to late 1970s.

### How do I know if I have HIV?

- The only way to know for sure whether you have HIV is to get tested. Knowing your HIV status helps you make healthy decisions to prevent getting or transmitting HIV.

### What are the symptoms?

Some people have flu-like symptoms within 2 to 4 weeks after infection (called *acute HIV infection*). These symptoms may last for a few days or several weeks. Possible symptoms include:

- Fever
- Rash
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Mouth ulcers
- Chills
- Night sweats
- Sore throat
- Swollen lymph nodes

But some people may not feel sick during acute HIV infection. These symptoms don't mean you have HIV. Other illnesses can cause these same symptoms.

See a health care provider if you have these symptoms and think you may have been exposed to HIV. Getting tested for HIV is the only way to know for sure.



## HIV Risk Reduction and Prevention

- HIV Risk Behaviors
  - Blood Transfusion
  - Injection Drug Use
  - Sex without a Condom
- HIV Treatment as Prevention
  - Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
  - Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)
  - Condoms
  - Male Circumcision
  - Abstinence
  - Being Monogamous

## Can HIV be cured?

There is no cure for HIV yet. However, antiretroviral treatment (ART) can control HIV and allow people to live a long and healthy life. For some people, treatment can reduce the level of HIV in their body to such a low amount that they are unable to pass it on (known as having an undetectable viral load). Having an undetectable viral load can keep you healthy, but it's not a cure for HIV. To maintain an undetectable viral load a person must keep adhering to their antiretroviral treatment.



## What are the stages of HIV?

### Stage 1: Acute HIV Infection

People have a large amount of HIV in their blood. They are very contagious. Some people have flu-like symptoms. This is the body's natural response to infection. But some people may not feel sick right away or at all. If you have flu-like symptoms and think you may have been exposed to HIV, seek medical care and ask for a test to diagnose acute infection. Only antigen/antibody tests or nucleic acid tests (NATs) can diagnose acute infection.

### Stage 2: Chronic HIV Infection

This stage is also called asymptomatic HIV infection or clinical latency. HIV is still active but reproduces at very low levels. People may not have any symptoms or get sick during this phase. Without taking HIV medicine, this period may last a decade or longer, but some may progress faster. People can transmit HIV in this phase. At the end of this phase, the amount of HIV in the blood (called viral load) goes up and the CD4 cell count goes down. The person may have symptoms as the virus levels increase in the body, and at this point, the person moves into Stage 3. People who take HIV medicine as prescribed may never move into Stage 3.

### Stage 3: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

The most severe phase of HIV infection. People with AIDS have such badly damaged immune systems that they get an increasing number of severe illnesses, called opportunistic infections. People receive an AIDS diagnosis when their CD4 cell count drops below 200 cells/mm, or if they develop certain opportunistic infections. People with AIDS can have a high viral load and be very infectious. Without treatment, people with AIDS typically survive about three years.

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## HIV Testing Locations

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dhsp/STDclinics.htm>

## Hotline and Referral Services

[hiv.gov](http://hiv.gov)

[eisnerhealth.org](http://eisnerhealth.org)