



What are HIV and AIDS?

HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. Today, people with HIV can live long, healthy lives with treatment. Learning about HIV can help you protect your health and make informed choices. Knowing the facts can help you take care of yourself and others.

The Basics

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV attacks the body's immune system, which helps fight illness.

Having HIV does not mean you have AIDS. HIV medicine can help people stay healthy and live long, healthy lives. Without treatment, HIV can damage the immune system over time and may lead to AIDS.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection. People who take HIV medicine as prescribed can often prevent HIV from becoming AIDS and live long, healthy lives.

How HIV Can Spread

HIV can spread through:

- Sex without HIV prevention methods, such as condoms or HIV treatment.
- Sharing needles or other equipment used to inject drugs.
- Pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding if HIV is not treated.

The chance of getting HIV from oral sex is low, but it is still possible in some situations.

HIV Today

Scientists have studied HIV for many years.

Thanks to research, HIV treatment has improved greatly.

Today, people with HIV who take their medicine can live long, healthy lives. Regular medical care and treatment help people stay healthy and lower the chance of passing HIV to others.

Signs of HIV

Many people with HIV do not have symptoms, especially in the early stages. The only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested.

If symptoms occur, they may include:

- Fever
- Swollen lymph nodes
- White patches in the mouth
- Skin rash
- Night sweats
- Weight loss
- Feeling very tired

These symptoms can happen with many illnesses. Only an HIV test can tell if you have HIV.

How to Help Prevent HIV

You can lower your chance of getting or passing HIV by:

- Using condoms during sex.
- Taking PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) if it is right for you.

- Taking PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) within 72 hours after a possible HIV exposure.
- Getting tested for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Not sharing needles or other injection equipment.
- Taking HIV medicine every day if you have HIV. People with an undetectable viral load cannot sexually transmit HIV. This is called Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U).
- Talking openly with your healthcare provider about HIV prevention and testing.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your Registered Nurse Care Manager, or call PHC California Nurse Advice Line at (800) 797-1717.