

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
HIV/AIDS Prevention Unit

HIV/AIDS 101 – FACTS

HIV can be found in body fluids, including”

- Blood
- Semen
- Pre-ejaculatory fluid
- Vaginal fluids
- Breast milk

(Some body fluids sometimes handled by healthcare workers - fluids surrounding the brain and spinal cord, bone joints, and around an unborn baby)

HIV is passed from one person to another by:

- Having sex (vaginal, anal, or oral) with a person who has HIV
- Sharing needles with a drug user who has HIV
- During pregnancy, birth, or breast-feeding if a mother has HIV
- Getting a blood transfusion from a person with HIV

Abstaining from (not having) sex is the most effective way to prevent HIV transmission. There are several ways to protect yourself or to prevent transmitting HIV during vaginal, oral, or anal sex if you choose to have sex:

- Get tested for HIV and know the HIV status of yourself and your partner
- Be faithful to your sexual partner
- Use condoms or other latex barriers during vaginal, oral, and anal sex, and never reuse condoms or latex barriers

HIV cannot be transmitted by casual contact. Here are the facts:

- You cannot get HIV from shaking hands or hugging a person with HIV/AIDS
- You cannot get HIV from using public telephones, drinking fountains, restrooms, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, or hot tub
- You cannot get HIV from sharing a drink
- You cannot get HIV from being coughed or sneezed on by a person with HIV/AIDS
- You cannot get HIV from giving blood
- You cannot get HIV from a mosquito bite

Transmission of HIV while getting a tattoo or through a body piercing is possible, but it can be prevented through:

- Single-use instruments intended to penetrate the skin being used only once, then disposed of
- Reusable instruments or devices that penetrate the skin and/or contact a client’s blood should be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized between clients according to medical guidelines

<http://aids.gov/basic/101/index.html>

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HIV/AIDS 101 – HOW HIV CAUSES AIDS

HIV destroys CD4 positive (CD4+) T cells, which are white blood cells crucial to maintaining the function of the human immune system. As HIV attacks these cells, the

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person infected with the virus is less equipped to fight off infection and disease, ultimately resulting in the development of AIDS.

Most people who are infected with HIV can carry the virus for years before developing any serious symptoms. But over time, HIV levels increase in the blood while the number of CD4+ T cells decline. Antiretroviral medicines can help reduce the amount of virus in the body, preserve CD4+ T cells and dramatically slow the destruction of the immune system.

People who are not infected with HIV and generally are in good health have roughly 800 to 1,200 CD4+ T cells per cubic millimeter (mm³) of blood. Some people who have been diagnosed with AIDS have fewer than 50 CD4+ T cells in their entire body.

<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/HIV/AIDS/Understanding/howHIVcausesAIDS/>

HIV/AIDS 101 – GLOSSARY

HIV

The virus that causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV is in the retrovirus family, and two types have been identified: HIV-1 and HIV-2. HIV-1 is responsible for most HIV infections throughout the world, while HIV-2 is found primarily in West Africa.

AIDS

A disease of the body's immune system caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). AIDS is characterized by the death of CD4 cells (an important part of the body's immune system), which leaves the body vulnerable to life-threatening conditions such as infections and cancers.

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IMMUNE SYSTEM

The collection of cells and organs whose role is to protect the body from foreign invaders. Includes the thymus, spleen, lymph nodes, B and T cells, and antigen-presenting cells.

T-CELL

A type of lymphocyte (disease-fighting white blood cell). The “T” stands for thymus, where T cells mature. T cells include CD4 and DC8 cells, which are both critical components of the body’s immune system.

CD4 CELL

Also known as helper T cell or CD4 lymphocyte. A type of infection-fighting white blood cell that carries the CD4 receptor on its surface. CD4 cells coordinate the immune response, signaling the other cells in the immune system to perform their special functions. The number of CD4 cells in a sample of blood is an indicator of the health of the immune system.

VIRAL LOAD

The amount of HIV (RNA) in a blood sample, reported as (the) number of HIV (RNA) copies per milliliter of blood plasma. The Viral Load provides information about the number of cells infected with HIV and is an important indicator of HIV progression and how well treatment is working.

<http://aids.gov/basic/glossary/index.html>