

HIV/AIDS Infection

Facts About

Only these body fluids contain enough HIV to allow infection:

- Blood
- Semen
- Vaginal Secretions
- Breast Milk

Body fluids such as Tears, Sweat, Urine, Vomit and Feces *cannot* transmit HIV.

Conditions required for these four body fluids to cause infection:

- Infected fluid must get into the bloodstream through mucous membranes such as found in the vagina, rectum, urethra, mouth or eyes, **or** infection can occur through direct access to the blood stream from activities such as needle sharing.
- There must be enough infectious material exchanged.

HIV can be transmitted in these ways:

- Having unprotected (no condom) sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal, or oral) with an infected person.
- Using or being stuck with a needle or syringe that has been used by or for an infected person. This includes needles used for any purpose, including body piercing, tattooing, legal or illegal drug use.
- From infected mother to child during pregnancy or childbirth.
- Receiving a blood transfusion of infected blood before 1985, or in rare situations, of blood products or other blood transfusion.
- In extremely rare situations, sharing a toothbrush or razor with an infected person, if blood is present.

HIV cannot be transmitted by:

- Mosquitoes or insects, donating blood, sharing food, hot tubs or swimming, hugging, kissing, toilet seats or any kind of casual contact.

Behaviors that reduce your risk of getting infected...

From sexual contact:

- choose to be abstinent
- choose to postpone sex
- choose to stay with one partner
- limit number of partners
- choose sexual behaviors that don't involve exchange of semen, vaginal fluids or blood
- use latex condoms every time you have intercourse
- use a latex barrier every time you have oral sex

From drugs:

- seek treatment, stop using
- decrease use
- don't share needles or equipment
- clean needles with bleach and water before sharing
- exchange dirty needles for clean needles

Other possible exposures:

- Risk of HIV infection is almost non-existent in most workplaces. If you do come in contact with blood or other risky body fluids, use latex gloves or barriers.
- Remember HIV requires specific conditions to transmit – most of these conditions are avoidable if you practice safer behaviors.

To successfully change behaviors it helps to:

- understand when you are at risk, and believe it.
- have self esteem that says "I'm worth caring for".
- communicate your wants and needs to partner(s).
- feel safe and supported in requesting certain behaviors such as condom use, needle cleaning or saying no.
- gain skills and confidence by practicing the behavior.
- keep alcohol use at a minimum so that you can think clearly and act sensibly.

For information, call the Health District at 1-800-874-AIDS or (360) 337-5235.