

HIV 101- A Refresher Course

**Understanding HIV/AIDS: Infection,
Diagnosis and Treatment Approaches**

Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
Video Communications and Distance Learning Division

Faculty

Bridget Byrd, HIV Program Coordinator
**Alabama Dept of Public
Health HIV/AIDS Division**
Public Health Area IV – 205-930-1023
bridgetbyrd@adph.state.al.us

What Is HIV?

- **HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. The virus that causes AIDS.**
- **HIV is different from most viruses because it attacks the immune system.**

What Is HIV?

- **Our immune system gives our bodies the ability to fight infections.**
- **HIV finds and destroys a type of white blood cell (T cells or CD4 cell).**

What Is AIDS?

- **AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is the final state of HIV infection.**
- **It can take years for a person infected with HIV, even without treatment.**

What Is AIDS?

- **Having AIDS means that the virus has weakened the immune system to the point at which the body has difficulty fighting infections.**

Brief History of HIV

- HIV was identified in the U.S. in 1981 after a number of gay men started getting sick with a rare type of cancer.
- During the early 1980's – 150,000 people became infected with HIV each year.
- Early 1990's the above rate had dropped to approximately 40,000 each year.

Brief History of HIV

- More people than ever before are living with HIV/AIDS.
- CDC (Centers for Disease Control) estimates that about 1 million people in the U.S. are living with HIV or AIDS.
- Approximately One Quarter (1/4) of these people do not know they are infected.

How HIV Is and Is Not Transmitted

- HIV is a fragile virus. It cannot live very long outside the body.
- As a result, the virus IS NOT TRANSMITTED through day-to-day activities such as: shaking hands, hugging, or a casual kiss.

How HIV Is and Is Not Transmitted

- You cannot become infected : toilet seat, drinking fountain, doorknob, dishes, drinking glasses, food or pets, feces, nasal fluid, saliva, sweat, tears, urine, or vomit unless these have blood mixed in them.

How HIV Is Transmitted

- Blood
- Semen
- Vaginal Fluid of an infected person
- Breast Milk

How HIV Is Transmitted

HIV is TRANSMITTED in 4 WAYS

- Having sex (anal, vaginal, oral) with someone infected with HIV
- Sharing needles and syringes with someone infected with HIV

How HIV Is Transmitted

- **Being exposed (fetus or infant) to HIV before or during birth or through breast feeding**
- **Blood infected with HIV**

Risk Factors for HIV Transmission

You may be at increased risk for infection if you:

- **Injected drugs or steroids and where blood were shared with others**
- **Had unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral sex with an MSM, multiple partners, or anonymous partners**

Risk Factors for HIV Transmission

You may be at increased risk for infection if you:

- **Exchange sex for drugs or money**
- **Been given a diagnosis or been treated for STD/STI**
- **Had unprotected sex with someone who has any of the risk factors above**

HIV Testing

- **Once HIV enters the body, the body starts to produce antibodies. Most HIV tests look for these antibodies rather than the virus itself.**
- **There are many kinds of HIV tests including rapid tests and home test kits.**

HIV Testing

- **Oral Fluid Tests – OraSure & OraQuick Advance Rapid**
- **Urine Tests**

Terms to Know

WHAT IS THE VIRAL LOAD?

- **From the viral load test (CD4+) count, doctors get important information: the amount of HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) in the blood of a person with HIV and the effect of HIV on that person's immune system.**

Terms to Know

WHAT IS THE WINDOW-PERIOD?

- The period between infection and the point when tests can detect antibodies is called: “window period”.
- This means that if people get tested during this period, their test results may be negative even though they have HIV.

Terms to Know

WHAT IS SEROCONVERSION?

- Used here to describe the change from an absence of antibodies to HIV in the blood to the presence of HIV antibodies in the blood of an HIV infected person.

Terms to Know

WHAT IS INCUBATION?

- It is used in this incidence to describe the period from the point of infection with HIV to the onset of symptoms of AIDS.

Resources

- **CENTERS FOR DISEASES CONTROL:**
www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics
- **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH:** <http://adph.org>
- **ADPH HIV/AIDS DIVISION:**
<http://adph.org/aids>