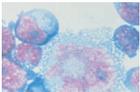


[baby dress up](#) [online games](#) [bride dress up games](#) [baby dress up games](#) [business web directory](#) [weddi](#)  
[ng dress up games](#)  
[bride dress up games](#)  
[online games](#)  
[jewelry making supplies](#)  
[2013 wedding trends](#)  
[landscape design ideas](#)

*Before we can stop any epidemic, we first have to recognize the magnitude of the disease. HIV is still a threat across the United States. And even though there are treatments to help people with HIV to live, longer than ever before, AIDS is still a significant health issue. Surprised? Get the facts:*

### What is HIV?



HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It's similar to other viruses, such as colds and the flu, with one important difference—the human body cannot get rid of HIV. That means once a person has HIV, he or she has it for life.

HIV affects specific cells of the immune system (called CD4 cells). Over time, HIV can destroy so many of these cells that the body can't fight off infection anymore.

There is no cure, but with proper medical care, the virus can be controlled.

### What are the stages of HIV?

HIV is a progressive disease, meaning it advances or worsens over time. If a person is infected with HIV and doesn't get treatment, it will eventually overwhelm his or her immune system and lead to acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

### The stages of HIV are:

**Acute (Severe) Infection**—Occurs as early as 2 to 4 weeks after infection (but sometimes as long as 3 months later); some people report flu-like symptoms during this time, but others have no symptoms at all. People with HIV are very infectious during this time, meaning they can pass the disease on to others. Symptoms can include night sweats, swollen lymph nodes, sore throat, rash, fatigue, muscle aches, and ulcers in the mouth.

**Clinical Latency (Dormancy or Inactivity)**—After the initial infection, the virus becomes less active in the body, but is still present. This period can last up to 10 years (sometimes longer), and many people do not have any symptoms of HIV during the clinical latency (or dormant/inactive) period. However, they can still give the infection to others at this time.

**AIDS**—This is the last stage of HIV infection; the person's immune system is badly damaged and he or she becomes susceptible to opportunistic infections (illnesses that attack weakened immune systems). Symptoms can include diarrhea, night sweats, fatigue, fever, chills, vomiting, and severe weight loss.

### What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is the final stage of HIV infection. People in this stage of the disease have badly damaged immune systems and are vulnerable to other infections, called opportunistic infections. These are infections that occur because of a weakened immune system. People are diagnosed with AIDS when they have one or more specific opportunistic infections, certain cancers, or a very low number of CD4 cells, which are important parts of the immune system.

People are generally diagnosed with AIDS when they have both a low CD4 count and one or

more opportunistic infections.

### **How is HIV spread?**

There is no cure for HIV, but you can prevent HIV infection. HIV is transmitted from one person to another:

By having sex, (anal, vaginal or oral) with a person who has HIV. HIV can be transmitted through blood, pre-seminal fluid, semen and vaginal fluid.

By sharing needles, syringes, or other injection equipment with a person who injects drugs and has HIV.

Through pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding. Women who have HIV can give the disease to their babies before or during birth or through breast-feeding after birth.



### ***To reduce your risk of getting HIV:***

Don't have sex at all (anal, vaginal, or oral).

Only have sex (anal, vaginal, or oral) if you are in a mutually monogamous relationship and you have both tested negative for HIV.

Use a condom every time you have anal, vaginal, or oral sex.

Do not share needles or other drug “works” (cotton, cookers, etc.) with anyone else.

### **Who is at risk for HIV?**

Anyone can be infected with HIV. However, certain groups of people are disproportionately affected by HIV. This means that these groups have more HIV infections than other groups, even though the overall group size is small. In the United States, these groups are disproportionately affected by HIV: gay/bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM), blacks/African Americans, and Hispanics/Latinos. Women— including those who are pregnant— also face risk. Those who abuse intravenous drugs and other substances are also at high risk.

If you think you are at high risk for exposure, or you have sex partners who may be, you should be tested for HIV at least once each year. Everyone between ages 13 and 64 should be tested at least once as part of routine health care.

#### **Blacks/African Americans**

Blacks/African Americans are the racial/ethnic group most affected by HIV. They represent approximately 13% of the U.S. population, but accounted for approximately 45% of all new HIV infections in the United States in 2006. (Source: [www.aids.gov](http://www.aids.gov))

## HIV/AIDS Basics

Written by Editors

Thursday, 29 November 2012 20:34

---