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**HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS is one of the worst STI’s, so I wanted to do research and really get information on how it’s the worst STI and why it spreads the way it does. I want to know if people can avoid it and fix the way they approach their everyday life and see if there is a way to prevent or lower the number of people with HIV/AIDS. Having HIV/AIDS is a life changing disease and can shorten life for you if you don’t get treatment.

**HIV/AIDS Facts**

* AIDS is a disease you get when HIV destroys your body's immune system.
* Normally, your immune system helps you fight off illness.
* When your immune system fails you can become very sick and can die from an illness as common as the flu.
* It is important to remember that AIDS is not synonymous with HIV.
* AIDS results from specific damage to the immune system and can be triggered by many different infections or diseases, one of which is HIV.
* AIDS stands for acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
* AIDS is also referred to as advanced HIV infection or late-stage HIV.
* AIDS is a set of symptoms and illnesses that develop because of advanced HIV infection which has destroyed the immune system.
* Treatment for HIV means that more people are staying well, with fewer people developing AIDS
* HIV/AIDS remains one of the world's most significant public health challenges, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.
* Because of research and testing done by antiretroviral therapy (ART), People can live a longer and a healthier life.
* An estimated 21.7 million people were receiving treatment for HIV in 2017
* In 2017, 8 out of 10 pregnant women living with HIV, or 1.1 million women, received antiretrovirals (ARVs).
* HIV infects 1.1 million Americans, and more than 18% are unaware of their infection.
* Every 9.5 minutes, someone becomes infected with HIV in the US.
* Black people represent approximately 12% of the US population but accounted for 44% of new HIV cases in 2010.
* Gay and bisexual men are the groups most severely affected by HIV in the US. They accounted for more than 60% of all new HIV infections in the US in 2009.
* Advances in treatment have substantially reduced AIDS-related deaths and extended the lives of Americans with HIV/AIDS.

**Warning Signs/Symptoms**

* Rapid weight loss
* Dry cough
* Recurring fever or profuse night sweats
* Profound and unexplained fatigue
* Swollen lymph glands in the armpits, groin, or neck
* Diarrhea that lasts for more than a week
* White spots or unusual blemishes on the tongue, in the mouth, or in the throat
* Pneumonia
* Red, brown, pink, or purplish blotches on or under the skin or inside the mouth, nose, or eyelids
* Memory loss, [depression](http://www.pamf.org/teen/life/depression/Teendepression.html), and other neurological disorders

**Attitudes Towards HIV/AIDS**

* A study was shown that 62% of the human population feels sorry for the people that are infected with HIV/AIDS.
* 23.7% believe that they should suffer because of the main way you get the STI is either unsafe sex or sharing needles which is a drug related issue so some people don’t feel bad.
* 10% of the people in the study showed that they don’t think they are a threat to society even though it’s a pretty bad STI. That number is low if you ask me.
* 88% say that children infected should not be allowed into schools. With the chance of other kids getting infected and ruining their life as well I agree.

**Risk Factors Associated with HIV/AIDS**

* Unsafe Sex: Having sex with someone that you don’t really know and haven't talked about having any STI’s is the best way to catch one. Using a condom helps with prevention but isn't 100 percent effective.
* Sharing Needles: reusing a needle from a drug user is always a bad idea in general and disgusting and is a great way to catch HIV/AIDS. Even getting tattoos make sure that the person sticking you has cleaned the needle because you can be infected that easy.
* Alcohol and Recreational drugs: Alcohol weakens your judgement and makes you make bad decisions usually so having unprotected sex and using needles comes into play and that’s a health concern.
* A sexually Transmitted Disease: Having an STD weakens the tissue in the vagina and the penis which makes it easier for an HIV infection to go in and infect you very quickly.
* Donated Blood: It's possible if you had a [blood](https://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/rm-quiz-blood-basics) transfusion or were given blood products before 1985. Since then, all blood in the United States and Western Europe gets tested for HIV.

**Attitudes Towards Prevention Efforts**

“A few years ago…it was all around treating the virus and stopping the disease progression for patients. Now, we’re looking for ways to reverse the disease, improve the immune system and purge the system of any remnants of the virus.” Brian Johns-- HIV/AIDS Researcher

* In the 1980s, HIV/AIDS was an acute fatal disease. Survival was measured in weeks and months.
* Today, HIV is considered a chronic, manageable condition with several once-daily treatment options thanks in part to the dedication of biopharmaceutical researchers.
* The introduction of anti-retroviral therapies (ARTs) in the mid-1990s revolutionized the treatment of HIV. Prior to ARTs, doctors could only treat some of the disease symptoms rather than the underlying cause.
* HIV wreaks havoc on the body’s ability to fight infections by destroying immune cells. ARTs modify the disease, directly attacking the virus and preventing its reproduction.
* By preventing HIV from replicating, ARTs improve the immune system’s ability to fight off infections and certain HIV related cancers.
* This innovative breakthrough has led to an 88 percent decline in death rates and prevented an estimated 862,000 premature deaths in the U.S.
* More recent discoveries continue to increase available treatment options for patients. Today there are [52 medicines and vaccines](http://phrma-docs.phrma.org/files/dmfile/HIV-MIDReport-2017.pdf?__hstc=46830328.ee2340e7a50d2a717ca61b9ff98ae1cf.1538495614697.1538495614697.1538495614697.1&__hssc=46830328.2.1538495614697&__hsfp=1881032846) for HIV currently in development, including additional combination treatments, more effective therapies and preventative vaccines.
* These medicines and vaccines are either in clinical trials or awaiting review by the Food and Drug Administration.
* Among the treatments are 32 antiretrovirals and antivirals, 16 vaccines and four cell therapies, including a potential first-in-class medicine intended to prevent HIV from attaching to new cells and breaking through the cell membrane.
* This is more proof that when scientists battle against the odds, it’s a heroic win for all of us.

All the Information above is from America’s Biopharmaceutical Company. “Winning the War Against HIV/AIDS.”

**Stigma**

* In 35% of countries with available data. 50% of the countries people report having discriminatory attitudes towards people with HIV.
* Stigma and discrimination also make people vulnerable to HIV.
* Discrimination and other human rights violations may occur in health care settings, barring people from accessing health services or enjoying quality health care.
* Some people living with HIV and other key affected populations are shunned by family, peers and the wider community, while others face poor treatment in educational and work settings, erosion of their rights, and psychological damage.
* More than 90% of new HIV infections in Central Asia, Europe, North America, the Middle East and North Africa in 2014 were among people from key populations and their sexual partners, who accounted for 45% of new HIV infections worldwide in 2015.
* Recent studies suggest that, globally, people who inject drugs are 24 times more likely to acquire HIV than the general population, sex workers are 10 times more likely and men who have sex with men are 24 times more likely.
* Transgender people are 49 times more likely and prisoners are five times more likely to be living with HIV than adults in the general population.

**Previous Campaigns**

**Start Talking. Stop HIV:** this campaign seeks to reduce the HIV infection among gays, bisexual and other men who have sex with other men by having an open discussion about ways that they could have safer sex. No matter the situation or relationship communication is the right way to go about finding a way to prevent HIV infection.

**Acting Against AIDS:** A five-year national campaign launched by CDC and the White House to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS among all Americans and to reduce the risk of HIV infection among the hardest-hit populations gay and bisexual men, African Americans, Latinos, and other communities at increased risk.

**Doing It:** Doing It is a new national HIV testing and prevention campaign designed to motivate all adults to get tested for HIV and know their status.

**Conclusion:**

The HIV/AIDS infection is something that if you are infected by it then your life is changed forever and the drugs that you need to stay functioning at a high level and you don't have to worry about anything for a while is very expensive. Getting a infection is never a good thing but this stays with you for life so knowing how to prevent it and being very cautious while doing the things that can cause effect you. If you practice safe sex and do things the way the scientist know will help, then you have nothing to worry about come getting tested for it.

**Questions**

1. Have you ever heard of AIDS or of HIV - the Human Immunodeficiency Virus that causes AIDS?
2. Can someone die from AIDS?
3. Is there a cure for AIDS?
4. Can a person infected with HIV look healthy?
5. Please tell me all the ways that a mother can transmit HIV/AIDS to her baby?
6. Have you ever had a test for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS?
7. What is your HIV status?
8. If you have NEVER been tested, why have you NOT been tested?
9. Have you ever heard about Antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS?
10. What do you do to avoid getting infected with HIV/AIDS?
11. In this community, at what age do young men begin having sexual intercourse?
12. In this community, at what age do young women begin having sexual intercourse?
13. Do you have a regular sexual partner?
14. The last time you had sex with your spouse or regular partner, did you or your partner use a condom?
15. Did you drink alcohol heavily the last time you had sex?