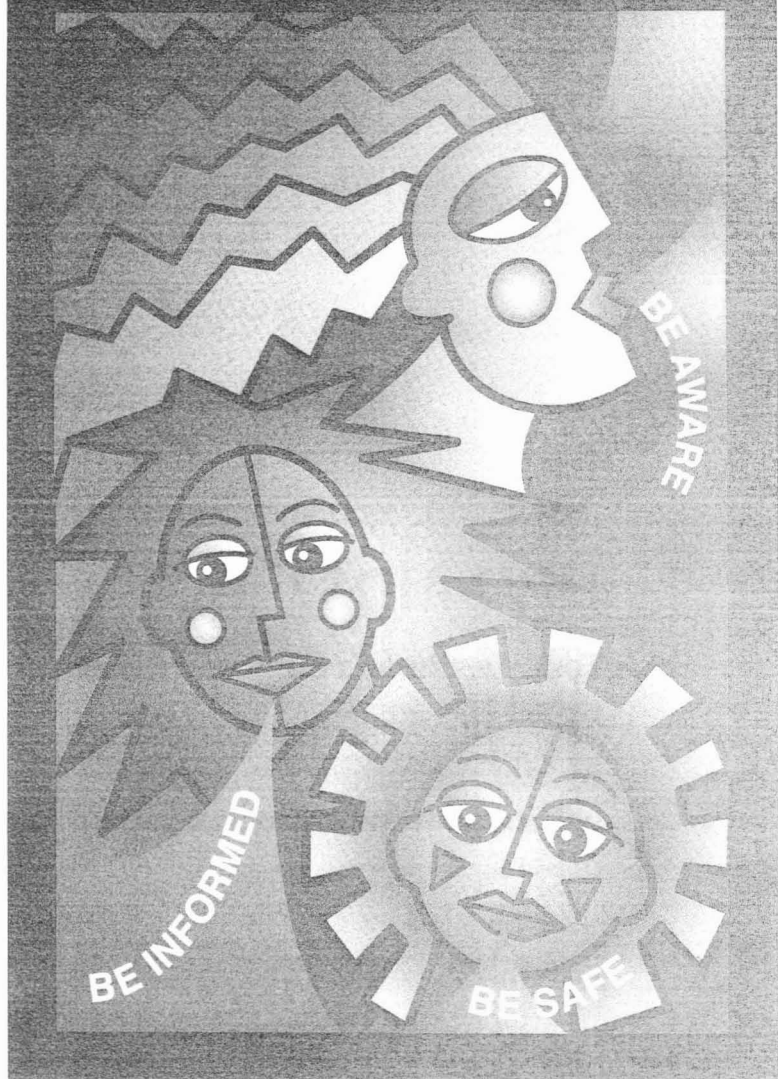


KNOW ABOUT...



HIV and AIDS

AIDS & Disability Action Program

This booklet has information and drawings about sex.



HIV? AIDS?

Today we hear a lot about diseases called HIV and AIDS.

By learning about HIV and AIDS you will know how to protect yourself and others.

● What is HIV?

HIV is an infection that weakens our immune system. Our immune system helps our body fight disease. Once our immune system is weak, it is easier for us to get sick.

● Who can get HIV?

- Women
- Men
- People of all ages
- Straight people and gays and lesbians
- People from all cultures

● What is AIDS?

AIDS is the last stage of the infection caused by HIV. People who get AIDS always get HIV first.

AIDS stands for **a**cquired **i**mmunode**f**iciency **s**yndrome.

HIV is short for **h**uman **i**mmunode**f**iciency **v**irus. A virus is a tiny germ that attacks the body.

People who have HIV will get AIDS, but this may not happen for years.

You cannot tell by looking at someone if they have HIV or AIDS. We protect ourselves from AIDS when we protect ourselves from HIV.

● How do you get HIV?

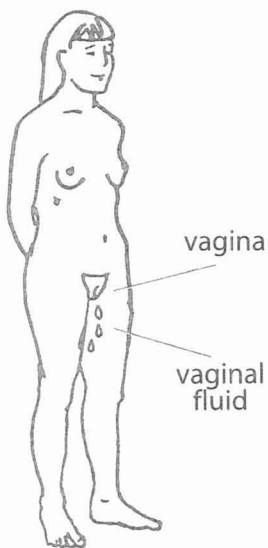
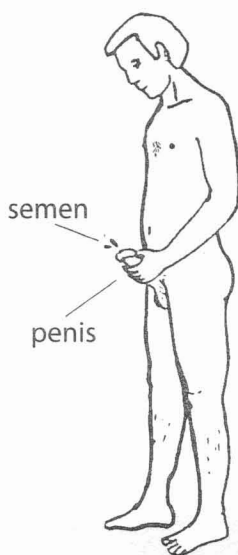
HIV is passed from one person to another mainly through 3 fluids.

1 Semen

The white sticky fluid that comes from a man's penis.

Semen can be passed to another person during sex.

Always use a condom.



2 Vaginal fluid

Wetness in a woman's vagina.

Wetness in the vagina can be passed to another person during sex.

3

Blood

You can get sick if blood from someone who has HIV gets into your body. Two common ways for blood to get into your body:

menstrual
blood



Menstrual blood

Blood from a woman's period can be passed to another person during sex.

blood



Needles

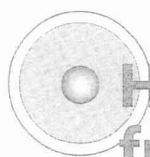
Needles used for injecting drugs or making body art (tattoos or piercing) can contain small amounts of blood after use.

Never share needles.

and...

HIV can also be passed from mothers with HIV to babies before or during birth.

HIV can also be passed to babies through the mother's breast milk.



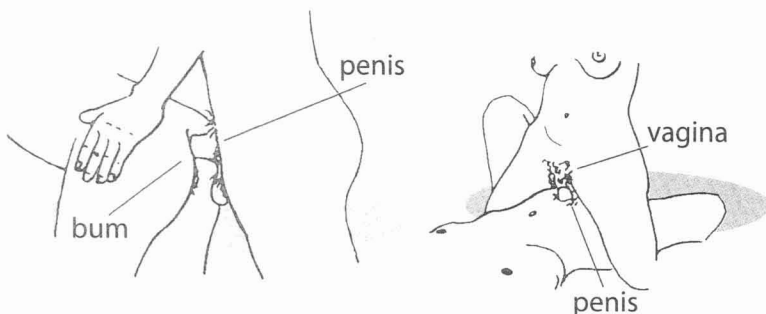
How to protect yourself from HIV and AIDS

1

You can choose not to have sex.
This is safest.

2

If you do have sex, always
use a condom.



donot...

Do not put your penis in somebody's bum or vagina without wearing a condom. Do not let somebody put their penis in your bum or in your vagina unless they are wearing a condom. Semen, blood and vaginal fluid can pass HIV from one person to another.

3

**Do not share needles
for drug use or body
art (tattoos or piercing).**



Remember

You cannot tell if someone has HIV or AIDS. Sometimes people do not know they have the virus. Some people will not tell you if they have HIV or AIDS.

You are not safe from HIV if you take birth control pills or have had an operation to stop you from getting pregnant (having your tubes tied). Birth control pills or operations stop pregnancy but not HIV. Only a condom will lower the risk of getting HIV.

About condoms

Latex condoms (rubber) are best for protecting you from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).



do...

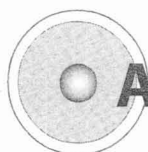


- Choose good quality brands such as Sheik, Ramses or Shields.
- Choose lubricated condoms. Use only water-based lubricants like K-Y® Jelly with condoms. Using petroleum jelly or oil as a lubricant might make the condom break.
- Check the expiry or "best before" date on the condom box or wrapper.
- Store condoms in a cool, dry place.



If you cannot buy condoms yourself, ask your doctor, healthcare worker, or local AIDS service organization (look under AIDS Information in your Yellow Pages) for help.

If you are allergic to latex, talk to your doctor or healthcare worker.



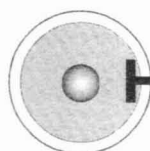
About needles

- If you use needles to shoot drugs, you can get help to stop.
- If you cannot or will not stop using injection drugs, you can lower your risk of HIV infection.
- Never share or re-use needles. Call an AIDS service organization for information about needle exchange programs.
- If you are getting a tattoo or piercing, ask people for names of artists you can trust. An AIDS service organization might be able to help you choose a safe body art shop.

About protecting your baby if you are pregnant

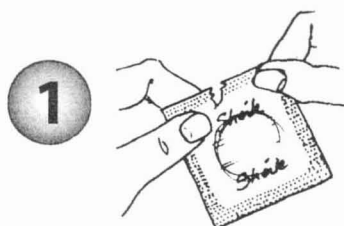
Talk to your doctor.

Get an HIV test.

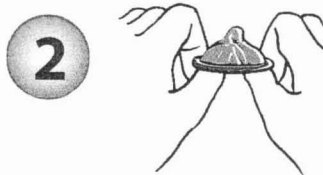


How to use a condom

To make sex safer, use a condom **every time**. The condom you use should be made of **latex** rubber. We recommend **lubricated** condoms.



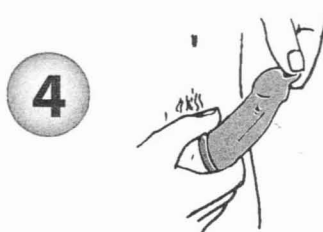
Open the package to remove the condom. Be careful your fingernails do not rip the condom.



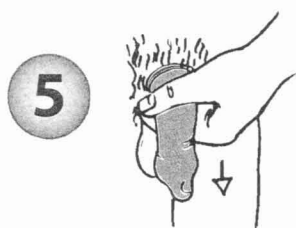
Carefully place your thumbs inside the condom to find out which way it unrolls.



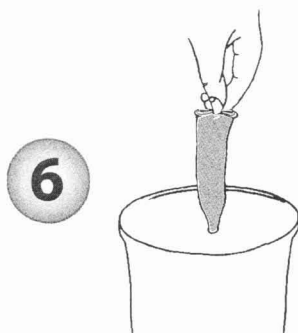
Once the penis is hard, put the condom on. Before rolling it down, squeeze any air out of the tip of the condom.



Hold the tip of the condom and unroll it all the way to the base of the penis.



After you have sex, move away from your partner and take off the condom. Be careful nothing spills out.

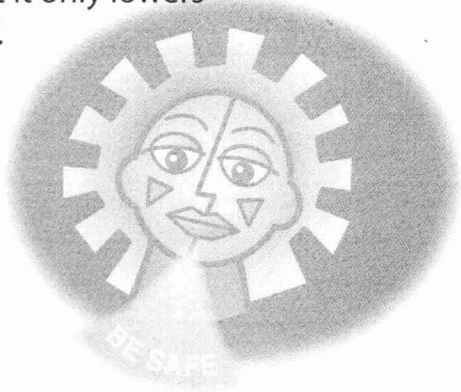


Throw the condom away. Never use a condom more than once.

Using condoms gets easier with practice.

Remember

Condoms can break, leak or slip. Using a latex condom is safer—but it only lowers the chance of getting HIV.





What is safe?

You will not get HIV from the air or casual contact with people infected with HIV or AIDS.

It is safe to:

- Sit next to someone who has HIV or AIDS
- Touch, shake hands or hug
- Use public bathrooms
- Share towels
- Eat in a restaurant
- Swim in a public pool
- Get an injection from a doctor or nurse

You will not get HIV or AIDS from an insect bite.

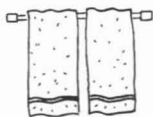
**it's
safe
to...**



**Hug and
hold hands**



**Use a public
washroom**



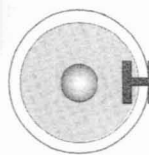
Share towels



**Eat in a
restaurant**



**Get an injection from
a doctor or nurse**



HIV and your body

Soon after being infected, people with HIV may feel like they have the flu. Others feel no symptoms at all.

The body's immune system tries to fight the virus. After a while, people with HIV may begin to feel better, but the virus is still in their body.

People with HIV can look and feel healthy for years.

After having HIV for some time, an infected person may notice some changes. Some of the signs of HIV include:

- Skin rashes
- Fever or 'night sweats'
- Swollen glands under the arms or in the neck or groin
- Sudden loss of weight
- Tiredness
- Change in appetite

Remember

People can have HIV and show and feel no signs at all.



Testing

Get an HIV test if you think you might have the virus. It is very important to be tested for HIV early.

Remember

HIV is spread through:

Semen • Vaginal fluid • Blood

If you are infected, signs of the virus called *HIV antibodies* are produced in your blood. A blood test can show that you are:

1. **HIV negative**—you do not have HIV antibodies, **or**
2. **HIV positive**—you have HIV.

It can take a few months before your blood makes the HIV antibodies. If your test is negative, your doctor may want to test you again.

If you are HIV positive, it is important to talk to your doctor about how to stay healthy. You must also tell your sex partner and anyone you have shared needles with that you have HIV.

To get a test, contact your doctor or community health centre, or visit a clinic.

● Things to remember

Having sex without a condom and sharing needles are ways of getting HIV.

You cannot tell if someone has HIV or AIDS by how they look. Some people do not know they have the virus. Some people will not tell you that they are sick.

● Protect yourself

Choosing not to have sex is safest.

If you do have sex, use a latex condom.

Never share or re-use needles.

Remember that drinking or using drugs makes you less careful. Do not risk getting sick with HIV.

If you think you might be infected, get tested and ask your partner to get tested.



● Protect others

If you are HIV positive, tell your sex partner and do not share needles.

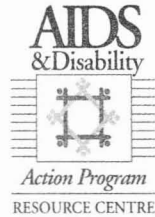
If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor about protecting your baby.



The AIDS & Disability Action Program (ADAP) and the Wellness & Disability Initiative (WDI) are programs of BC Coalition of People with Disabilities.

Contact us for health information on other topics.

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**Wellness
& Disability
Initiative**



You can get more information about HIV and AIDS from:

- The person or group that gave you this booklet
- The Wellness & Disability Initiative/AIDS & Disability Action Program at the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
- An AIDS service organization—check your Yellow Pages under AIDS Information
- Your doctor, nurse, Health Unit, Community Health Centre or Clinic



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Illustrations by Carol Weaver/ www.carolweaver.com