HIV, or Human Immunodeficiency Virus, is the virus that causes AIDS, which stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. HIV is different from most viruses because it attacks your body’s ability to fight infections.

**EARLY HIV**

Early HIV is the start of HIV, right after someone gets the virus. You are at risk if you do not know your partner is living with HIV. During the early stage the virus is spreading very quickly, and HIV can be easily passed to others through sex or sharing needles.

**IS IT THE FLU OR EARLY HIV?**

The signs of early HIV and the flu are similar, but not the same. Still not sure? Ask yourself:

- Is there a rash?
- Did you have unprotected sex or share a needle in the past few weeks?
- Do you have a new sexually transmitted infection?

**SIGNS OF EARLY HIV**

Symptoms can begin 2-4 weeks after learning you are living with HIV. Symptoms can last for just a few days, a couple weeks or even several months.

**Remember:** People with HIV may not look sick. The only way to know if you have HIV for sure is to get an HIV test.

**WAYS YOU CANNOT GET HIV**

- Shaking Hands
- Food
- Water
- Hugging or Kissing
- Sneezes
- Toilets
- Pets
- Mosquitos or Bugs

**TESTING FOR EARLY HIV INFECTION**

If you think you might have been exposed to HIV within the last 30 days or you have symptoms, talk with your doctor to make sure you get the right HIV test.

Certain HIV tests can spot HIV as early as 7-10 days after exposure.
FACTS ABOUT HIV AND TESTING

- HIV can be spread through unsafe sex and sharing needles
- Partners can keep each other safe by knowing their HIV status, getting HIV treatment or taking HIV PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis)
- HIV testing is voluntary, and all test results are kept private by New York state law
- HIV testing is available to people who don’t want to give their name
- Testing is especially important for pregnant women, who can also pass HIV to their baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding
  - Pregnant women with HIV who do not get treatment have a 1 in 4 chance of passing HIV to their baby
  - The chance of passing HIV to their baby is much lower for those who get HIV treatment

FACTS ABOUT PrEP

- PrEP is a daily pill that helps people worry less about getting HIV
- HIV testing is done before starting PrEP, because PrEP is only for people who are HIV negative
- Consider PrEP if you:
  - Have multiple or anonymous sex partners
  - Engage in high-risk sexual activity
  - Had at least one sexually transmitted infection
  - Inject substances such as illegal drugs or hormones
  - Have sex with partners who engage in any of the above

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

New York State HIV/AIDS Hotlines (Toll-Free)
English: 1-800-541-AIDS
Spanish: 1-800-233-SIDA
TTY: 711
www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids
www.health.ny.gov/PrEP

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) AIDS Hotlines
English: 1-800-342-2437
Spanish: 1-800-344-7432
www.cdc.gov/HIV

Healthline
www.healthline.com/health/acute-hiv-infection

Independent Health 24-Hour Medical Help Line*
1-800-501-3439


*Independent Health’s 24-Hour Medical Help Line should not be used for diagnosis or as a substitute for a physician.