

HIV AND AIDS

Early Signs of HIV



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.

Shared Symptoms of Flu and Early HIV

Fever, Tired Feeling, Muscle Aches,
Headaches, Sore Throat, Swollen Glands

Flu Symptoms

Stuffy Nose, Cough,
Sneezing

Early HIV Symptoms

Rash, Mouth Sores,
Diarrhea, Tonsillitis

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
- Mosquitoes 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: 1-800-541-2437

Spanish: 1-800-233-7432

TTY: 711

www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids

www.health.ny.gov/PrEP

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) AIDS Hotlines

1-800-232-4636

www.cdc.gov/HIV



Independent Health 24-Hour Medical Help Line*

1-800-501-3439



SOURCE: New York State Department of Health, 2024.

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