

AIDS

(Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

Does anybody have an intimate relationship? Has anyone of you ever thought about AIDS before having sex without protection? AIDS is a word, which meant punishment for all those who didn't obey certain rules of normal sexual behavior. But today it means punishment for those who are having sexual intercourse without protection.

AIDS is abbreviation for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. A result of human immune-deficiency-virus (HIV) that makes the immune system less able to fight infection. The time between infection to becoming symptomatic with a disease is called incubation period. The incubation period is long as eleven years. The cause of that is in all cases pneumonia cancer or infection with bacteria and viruses.

Routes of transmission

The chart represents primary routes of transmission of the AIDS virus. The largest single group is still male to male sexual contact (at 53%), the second largest transmission groups are those who use injected drugs (25%), male to female sexual contact (7%), transfusion with blood products (2%) and unknown risk (6%).

How is AIDS transmitted

HIV is spread by sexual contact with an infected person, by needle-sharing among injecting drug users, or, less commonly, through transfusions of infected blood. Babies born to HIV-infected women may become infected before or during birth, through breast-feeding after birth. Some people fear that HIV might be transmitted in other ways; however no scientific prove has been found. If HIV were being transmitted through other routes, for example, through air or insects, the pattern of reported AIDS cases would be much different from what has been observed.

Since HIV is unable to reproduce outside its living host, except under laboratory conditions, it does not spread or maintain infectious outside its host.

You can't get AIDS from:

- casual contact such as touching or holding hands;
- shared use of dishes;
- public toilets / drinking fountains;
- telephones;
- public transport;
- swimming pool, because of the chlorine in the water will automatically kill the virus;
- sweat tears or bytes are unlikely;
- kissing: casual contact through closed mouth or social kissing is not a risk for transmission of HIV. Because of theoretical potentials for contact with blood during French or open mouth kissing this activity is not recommended with the infected person.
- insects such as mosquitoes.

Who should take the test

- man who have engaged in homosexual behavior;
- intravenous drug users;
- women who are considering pregnancy and who are at risk of HIV infection, or whose sexual partners are at risk;
- heterosexual man and woman;
- previously tested HIV negative individuals, who continue to practice high-risk behavior.

If you think, that you might be infected you can take the test in the Microbiological Institute in Ljubljana on Zaloska cesta 4 (the building of Medical University). You can take anonymous or confidential testing. Confidential testing means, that you are identified and the results are recorded in medical files and are not revealed without written permission. Anonymous testing means that name and other identifying information is not linked with results and only individuals can find out test results.

The first case of AIDS was recorded in 1952 in Memphis, USA under diagnose pneumonia. A person dies two months later. AIDS broke out in the year 1981 in San Francisco, USA.

No effective cure has been found yet, but life expectancy is getting higher. The only safe protection is the use of condom. In Slovenia we have over 200 known cases of HIV positive persons, but this number will double in two years time.

Sex is an important part of human's life and it is not exactly optimistic that we have to connect sex with death. AIDS is spreading irresistible, the experiences show that nothing changes the individuals until they are infected themselves. AIDS is among us, open your eyes widely, tomorrow might be too late.

Don't die of ignorance!