



M A N A G E R ' S K I T

FAMILY EDUCATION

**USER'S
GUIDE**

**WORKPLACE
POLICY**

**EMPLOYEE
EDUCATION**

**FAMILY
EDUCATION**

**COMMUNITY
SERVICE**

RESOURCES

SITE MAP

HELP

F A M I L Y E D U C A T I O N

- A Family AIDS Prevention Guide for Workers
 - A Manager's Guide for Family Education through the Workplace
-



A Managers Guide for Family Education Through the Workplace

FAMILY EDUCATION FOR THE EMPLOYER — WHAT ARE THE BUSINESS BENEFITS OF PROVIDING FAMILY HIV EDUCATION?

Employee family education is a logical — and necessary — step in a comprehensive AIDS in the workplace prevention program. A family aware of the risks of HIV is better able to avoid infection, and therefore is more likely to stay healthy. And a healthy family may be associated with less emotional drain on the family member who is an employee, and less financial drain on the company-sponsored family health plan.

Preventing HIV infections among family members is vitally important. Every employer's applicant base will be affected by these statistics:

- Although the absolute proportion of HIV and AIDS among women and adolescents is small compared to other groups, the rate of increase of HIV and AIDS among women and adolescents is disturbingly high.
- At the end of 1996, more than 2,700 adolescents in the United States were reported to have AIDS and thousands more were infected with HIV, the precursor to developing AIDS.

Contributing to the health of employees and their families may lead to cost savings for some insurance plans. Preventing infections among family members is an important step in managing health care costs.

An employee who has a family member with HIV may become too distracted to maintain full productivity, especially if the employee is the caregiver. Sometimes co-workers are afraid to associate with someone who is caring for a person with AIDS, which can impair the overall productivity of the office. Caregivers, not just employees with HIV, are protected from workplace discrimination by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The children in your community are probably your future workforce. Ensuring their health is of paramount importance.

Is there reliable information for employers to provide to employees' families? Yes. We know how HIV is transmitted and how to prevent infections. We cannot assume that our employees' families, particularly their children, are learning how to protect themselves against HIV infection.

Every employer faces the challenge of helping to reduce the rate of HIV infection to protect the present and future workforce.

SOME DISTURBING FACTS

Surveys have found that:

- The average age for a girl in the United States to have sexual intercourse for the first time is 16. The average age for a boy is 15. This means that half the young people start having sex before these ages.
- Every 30 seconds a teen in the United States gets pregnant.
- Each year, it is estimated that 3 million teens are infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as herpes, chlamydia, or gonorrhea. The virus that causes AIDS is sexually transmitted.
- Sixty percent of all American high school seniors have used illegal drugs. Some of these drugs are injected. The virus that causes AIDS is spread through the sharing of drug injection equipment such as needles or syringes.

YOUNG PEOPLE, HIV INFECTION, AND AIDS

Recent studies show that most people develop AIDS in their twenties and thirties. Because a person can be infected with the virus that causes AIDS for as long as 10 or more years before the signs of AIDS appear, many of these young people were likely infected when they were teenagers.

In fact, the statistical studies show that there is a “wave” of HIV infections as each generation enters the late teens and early twenties. To prevent this wave of infections happening over and over as each new group of children comes of age, parents, teachers, coaches, religious leaders, athletes, and others who are concerned about young people must talk to them about HIV and AIDS.

Many teens engage in behaviors that increase their risk of becoming infected. Adults sometimes have no idea that the young people they know may be having sexual intercourse or experimenting with injected drugs. These activities can increase their risk of HIV infection. Young people need to know about AIDS and the specific actions they can take to protect themselves and their loved ones from becoming infected. A family education program can help your employees talk to their children about HIV and how to protect themselves from infection.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM

Though urban areas have had a high prevalence of HIV infection, the rate of new AIDS cases is rising more quickly in rural areas than in urban areas, and most communities have already felt the impact of the epidemic. Even in small communities, there are resources to help you provide an effective family education program about HIV/AIDS. Here are the steps to providing a reliable, informative program for your employees and their families:

- Use the guidelines in this kit to develop and communicate/publish a company policy on AIDS and other life-threatening illnesses so that employees understand what to expect at work and how the policy may affect their families and communities.

- Assess employees' need and desire for education for themselves and their families.
- Call the CDC's Business and Labor Resource Service (1-800-458-5231) for technical assistance and referrals to local or state agencies that may be of assistance.
- Check with other businesses in your area to learn what they have done. You may get useful referrals to agencies and providers.
- Screen providers of HIV/AIDS education to find a good "fit" with your company and community. Ask for references. Look for providers who are committed to stopping the epidemic from a public health point of view.
- Invite employees to serve on a task force to provide input for your family education programs.
- Implement the other components of the Business Responds to AIDS/Labor Responds to AIDS Programs: train managers, supervisors, and labor leaders; educate employees and their families; and support community involvement and volunteerism (e.g., sponsor a health fair).
- Provide a family education presentation with materials for employees to take home. Seek input from a wide spectrum of HIV education resources, such as the American Red Cross, State health departments, and local AIDS service organizations. Give the feedback to your task force members and ask them to consider it in their ongoing planning.
- Provide materials for employees to take home.
- Make family HIV/AIDS education an ongoing project. Due to employee turnover and the inevitable aging of employees' children, it is important to offer family HIV/AIDS education periodically.

You may be surprised at the positive reactions your employees may have to family HIV/AIDS education presentations. Evidence suggests that employees often respond to HIV/AIDS education programs with gratitude and appreciation.

The information in this publication is solely for general information and for educational purposes and is not intended to be legal advice. Businesses and individuals should consult an attorney for specific legal advice.



A Family AIDS Prevention Guide for Workers

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INTRODUCTION

Educating your children about health behaviors can often be a daunting job. Family education is a key component of the Business Responds to AIDS Program as it targets a new generation of young people who need to learn the basic facts about this disease. *A Family AIDS Prevention Guide for Workers* will help prepare parents for the task of informing their children about HIV/AIDS.

This guide equips parents with:

- a primer on the science of HIV/AIDS,
- facts about the transmission of HIV,
- common questions that might be raised by your child and accurate answers to dispel any myths,
- tips on starting and running a conversation on HIV and sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention,
- reproducible pages providing information on HIV/AIDS for your child or teenager, and
- resources for more information provided throughout the booklet.

As a parent, only you can determine what to tell your child. This guide will help you disseminate accurate information to your family.

A PARENT’S PRIMER ON THE SCIENCE OF HIV/AIDS

- HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).
- HIV infection causes the body’s immune system to break down so that the body can’t fight off illnesses.
- AIDS is the end stage of HIV infection.

How the Immune System Works

The immune system is a network of cells and organs that work together to defend the body against infection by germs, such as HIV. Lymphocytes and macrophages (types of white blood cells) play key roles in the functioning of the immune system. When a person becomes infected with HIV, the virus attaches to specific parts of the surfaces of these white blood cells. These specific parts (or molecules) are called CD4 cells. When HIV enters one of these cells, the virus inserts its own genes into the cell’s reproductive system and uses it to produce more HIV. This infection kills the CD4 cell and spreads HIV to other CD4 cells, where the process is repeated.

If HIV enters the body, the immune system will begin to make antibodies to the virus. Normally, antibodies help protect the body from infection. This is not the case in someone with HIV infection. Antibodies can be detected by a test using blood or oral fluids from inside the mouth. A person is positive if he or she has two or more initial “reactive” HIV antibody tests, the findings of which are then confirmed by

another more specific antibody test. The period between infection and the development of detectable antibodies is the seroconversion period (also referred to as the window period). People with HIV can still infect others during this time.

HIV can be present in the body for 2 to 12 or more years without producing any outward sign of illness. Infection with HIV appears to be lifelong in all who become infected. People infected with HIV eventually develop symptoms that also may be caused by other, less serious conditions. With HIV infection, these symptoms usually last a long time and often are more severe. They include enlarged lymph glands, tiredness, fever, loss of appetite and weight, diarrhea, yeast infections of the mouth and vagina, and night sweats.

When the immune system becomes weaker, the infected person becomes more susceptible to illnesses that normally do not occur in healthy people. These illnesses are called opportunistic because they take advantage of damage to the immune system. A person is considered to have AIDS when one or more opportunistic infections occur. The most common opportunistic infections are PCP (pneumocystis carinii pneumonia — a rare type of pneumonia), yeast infections of the esophagus (the tube that carries food to the stomach), Kaposi's sarcoma (a cancer of certain blood vessels), and CMV (cytomegalovirus — an infection of the eye that can cause blindness). Also, if an infected person's CD4 cell count drops to below 200, he or she is considered to have AIDS. A healthy person usually has a range of 800 to 1,200 CD4 cells.

Even if someone has no signs of illness or infection, he or she can still infect others. HIV is spread mainly by sexual contact with an infected person, by sharing needles and/or syringes (mostly through drug injection) with someone who is infected, or, less commonly (and now very rarely in countries where blood is tested for HIV antibodies), through transfusions of infected blood or blood-clotting factors. Babies born to HIV-infected women may become infected before or during birth, or through breastfeeding after birth.

There is no way yet to tell who will be healthy longer, but getting medical treatment as soon as possible after infection and getting regular care from a doctor can delay the development of AIDS and potentially help an infected person live longer. Today, new medicines called protease inhibitors, used in combination drug therapy (with antiviral drugs such as AZT or ddI), are helping people with HIV live longer and may be effective in delaying the onset of illness.



HOW PEOPLE CAN AND CANNOT BECOME INFECTED WITH HIV

How Can People Become Infected With HIV?

- by having unprotected (without a condom) sex (anal, vaginal, or oral) with someone with HIV
- by sharing needles and/or syringes with someone with HIV
- from a mother with HIV to her baby before or during birth or through breastfeeding
- from a transfusion of blood or blood-clotting factors before 1985

How Do People Get HIV From Sexual Intercourse?

HIV can be spread through unprotected sexual intercourse from male to female, female to male, male to male, or female to female. Unprotected sexual intercourse means sexual intercourse without correct and consistent use of a latex condom or any other physical barrier to HIV (such as the female condom).

HIV may be in an infected person's blood, semen, or vaginal secretions. It can enter the body through certain types of tissues, especially the tissues that line the inside of the vagina, anus, and penis. It can also enter through cuts or tears (some of which may already be present, and some of which may occur during intercourse) in the vagina, penis, rectum, or mouth. HIV is transmitted by anal, vaginal, or oral sexual intercourse with a person who is infected with HIV.

If someone has an STD such as syphilis or gonorrhea, he or she is at risk of becoming infected with HIV. There are two reasons for this. One is that the person is involved in the same behaviors that spread HIV. The other reason is that some STDs cause sores on the body — usually the already vulnerable soft tissues of the penis, vagina, and rectum. The presence of these sores can make it easier for the virus to enter the body.

Since many infected people have no symptoms, it's hard to be sure who is or is not infected with HIV. The more sex partners someone has without using condoms, the greater his or her chances are of encountering one who is infected, and becoming infected.

- Anybody can have HIV...of either gender and of any race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. And no matter how healthy or attractive a person is, he or she could still be infected with HIV.

How Do People Get HIV From Using Needles?

Sharing needles, syringes, or other drug preparation “works” even once with another person is an easy way to be infected with HIV. Blood from an infected person can remain in or on a needle or syringe and then be transferred directly into the body of the next person who uses it.

While spreading of HIV can happen when people share needles to inject illegal drugs, the sharing of needles and syringes used for injecting other substances could

transmit HIV. Types of needles include those used to inject steroids or vitamins and those used for tattooing or ear or body piercing. If you get a tattoo or pierced ears by a professional who uses a sterile needle for each customer, there is no risk of infection with HIV. People should not be shy about asking questions. Reputable technicians will explain the safety measures they follow.

HIV and Babies

A woman infected with HIV can pass the virus on to her baby during pregnancy or during birth. She can also pass it on when breastfeeding. If a woman is infected before or during pregnancy, her child has about 1 chance in 4 of being born infected. Following a specific drug regimen that includes AZT during pregnancy can reduce this risk to about 1 in 12.

- Any woman who is considering having a baby and who thinks she might have placed herself at risk for HIV infection — even if this occurred years ago — should seek counseling and testing before she gets pregnant. To find out where in your area someone can go for counseling and testing, call your local health department or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National AIDS Hotline, 1-800-342-AIDS (2437). For more information about counseling and testing, see the part of this guide titled “Common Questions, Accurate Answers.”



Blood Transfusions and HIV

Although in the past some people became infected with HIV from receiving blood transfusions, this risk is extremely low now. Since 1985, all donated blood has been tested for evidence of HIV. All blood found to contain evidence of HIV is discarded.

Giving blood at a blood bank or at other established blood collection centers is not a risk for HIV infection. The needles used for blood donations are sterile. They are used once, then destroyed.

What Are Other Ways People Can Get HIV?

Health Care Setting

Workers have been infected with HIV after being stuck with needles and, less frequently, after infected blood or concentrated virus came in contact with the workers' open cuts or splashed into a mucous membrane (e.g., the eyes or the inside of the nose). There has been only one instance where patients were infected by one health care worker. Investigations have been completed involving thousands of patients of many other HIV-infected health care workers. No other cases of this type of transmission have been found.

Kissing

Because of the potential for contact with blood during “French” or open-mouth kissing, experts recommend against engaging in this activity with a person known to be infected with HIV. However, the risk of acquiring HIV during open-mouth kissing is believed to be very low. CDC has investigated one case of HIV infection that may be attributed to contact with blood during open-mouth kissing.

Biting

A State health department conducted an investigation of an incident that suggested blood-to-blood transmission of HIV by a human bite. There have been other reports in the medical literature in which HIV appears to have been transmitted by a bite. Severe trauma with extensive tissue tearing and damage and presence of blood were reported in each of these instances. Biting is not a common way of transmission of HIV. In fact, there are numerous reports of bites that did not result in HIV infection.

What Are Ways People Cannot Get HIV?

HIV infection doesn't just happen. People don't simply "catch" it like a cold or flu. Unlike cold or flu viruses, HIV is not spread by coughs or sneezes, sweat, or tears.

HIV is not spread through everyday contact with infected people at school, at work, at home, or anywhere else.

HIV is not spread by clothes, phones, or toilet seats. It can't be passed on by things like spoons, cups, or other objects that someone who is infected with the virus has used.

HIV is not spread by bites from mosquitoes. HIV does not live in a mosquito, and it is not transmitted through a mosquito's salivary glands like other diseases such as malaria or yellow fever. HIV is not spread by bedbugs, lice, flies, or other insects.

HIV is not spread through closed-mouth kissing. Experts maintain that casual contact through closed-mouth or "social" kissing is not a risk for transmission of HIV.





COMMON QUESTIONS, ACCURATE ANSWERS

An important part of being ready to talk to young people about preventing HIV infection and AIDS is being able to answer questions they may ask.

If someone asks you a question about HIV infection or AIDS and you do not know the answer, it's okay to say you don't know. Don't make up an answer — you may be providing inaccurate information that can cause a lot of harm. Take steps to obtain accurate information.

Treat a tough question as a chance to show the questioner how to get information about HIV infection and AIDS independently. You, or anyone else, can get accurate answers to difficult questions by calling your local AIDS Hotline or the CDC National AIDS Hotline, 1-800-342-AIDS (2437). You do not have to give your name, and the call is free.

To help you answer questions that might be raised by your child, here are some commonly asked questions with scientifically correct answers:

■ If somebody in my class at school has AIDS, am I likely to get it too?

No. HIV is spread by unprotected sex, needle sharing, or infected blood. It can also be given by an infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding.

People infected with HIV cannot pass the virus to others through ordinary school activities such as:

- showering together in the gym locker room
- playing sports
- sharing water bottles
- sharing utensils

You will not become infected with HIV just by attending school with someone who is infected with HIV or who has AIDS.

■ Can I become infected with HIV from “French” kissing?

There is the potential, especially when either partner has advanced gum disease or other conditions where blood is present, for contact with blood during “French” or open-mouth kissing. For this reason, experts recommend against engaging in this activity with a person known to be infected with HIV. However, the risk of acquiring HIV during open-mouth kissing is believed to be very low. CDC has investigated only one case of HIV infection that may be attributed to contact with blood during open-mouth kissing.

■ Can I get HIV from a toilet seat or other things I use a lot?

No. HIV does not live on toilet seats or other everyday objects. You do not have to worry about doorknobs, phones, money, or drinking fountains.

■ Can I get HIV from a mosquito or other insect?

No. You won't get HIV from bites from mosquitoes. The AIDS virus does not live in a mosquito, and it is not transmitted through a mosquito's salivary glands like other diseases such as malaria or yellow fever. You won't get it from bedbugs, lice, flies, or other insects, either.



■ If I have never injected drugs and have had sexual intercourse only with a person of the opposite sex, could I have become infected with HIV?

Yes. You do not have to be homosexual or use drugs to become infected. Both males and females can become infected and transmit the virus to a male or female through sex. If a previous sex partner, of either sex, was infected, you may be infected as well.

■ Can I become infected with HIV from oral sex?

It is possible, though not as likely as infection through anal or vaginal sex.

- Oral sex often involves semen, vaginal secretions, or blood — fluids that contain HIV.
- HIV can be transmitted when someone gets semen, vaginal secretions, or blood from an infected person into his or her body.
- During oral sex, the virus could enter the body through tiny cuts or tears in the mouth.
- Condoms or other protective barriers should be used to prevent contact with body fluids.

■ A friend of mine told me that as long as I am taking birth control pills, I will never get HIV infection. Is this true?

No. Birth control pills do not protect against HIV. You can become infected with HIV while you are taking birth control pills. The only sure way not to become infected is to:

- abstain from having sex
- avoid needle sharing
- not have unprotected sex

Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, can prevent HIV infection and other STDs. Use them the right way every time you have sex.

Even if you are taking the Pill, you should use a latex condom unless you and your partner are sure that neither is infected with HIV.

You can't be sure that you don't have HIV unless you are tested for the presence of HIV antibodies. In most people who are infected with HIV, it takes up to three months to develop enough antibodies to be detectable on the test. In some people, it could take up to six months. Until you are sure you and your partner are not infected with HIV, you should continue to use condoms if you have sex.

- My friend has anal sex with her boyfriend so that she won't get pregnant. She won't get AIDS from doing that, right?

Wrong. Anal intercourse with an infected partner is one of the ways HIV has most often been spread. Whether you are male or female, anal sex is very risky.

- Is it possible to become infected with HIV by donating blood?

No. There is absolutely no risk of HIV infection from donating blood in the United States. All blood donation centers use a new, sterile needle for each donation.

- I had a blood transfusion after 1985. Is it likely that I am infected with HIV?

No, it is unlikely. All blood donations have been tested for antibodies to HIV since 1985. The American Red Cross and other established blood collection centers use an extensive two-part screening process of all prospective blood donors. The donor is asked about his or her likelihood of being infected through his or her behavior. If the person's answers reveal that he or she may have a chance of having HIV, he or she is not permitted to donate blood. If the answers reveal no risk of HIV infection, the person is able to donate blood.

Once the blood is donated, it is tested for the presence of antibodies to HIV, including other infections and diseases. All blood donations that test positive for HIV are discarded. Today, the American blood supply is extremely safe.

If you are still concerned about the very small possibility of HIV infection from a transfusion, you should see your doctor or seek counseling about getting an HIV antibody test. Call the CDC National AIDS Hotline, 1-800-342-AIDS (2437), or your local health department to find out about counseling and testing sites in your area.



- I think I might have gotten infected two months ago when I had sex without a condom with someone I didn't know. Should I get an HIV test?

Yes. You should talk to a counselor (doctor or professional health care worker at a testing site) about the need for HIV testing. Or you can call the CDC National AIDS Hotline, 1-800-342-AIDS (2437), to find out where you can go in your area to get counseling about an HIV test.

Remember, due to the period between infection and development of antibodies (the seroconversion or window period), you could be infected with HIV and not show it on a test. You can infect others during this time.

- As long as I use a latex condom during sex, I won't get HIV infection, right?

If you choose to have sex, a latex condom can provide protection from HIV. Latex condoms have been shown to prevent HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. You have to use them consistently and correctly each time you have sex — vaginal, anal, or oral.

■ What is the proper way to use a condom?

You can greatly lower your chances of infection with HIV or any other STD if you follow this list of simple instructions:

Use a latex condom consistently and correctly every time you have sex — anal, vaginal, or oral. Latex serves as a physical barrier to the virus. “Lambskin” or “natural membrane” condoms are not as good because of the pores in the material. Look for “latex” or “for disease prevention” on the package. If you have allergies to latex, there is a new polyurethane (a type of plastic) condom available to help prevent HIV infection. Lab testing has shown that particles as small as sperm and HIV cannot pass through polyurethane. Polyurethane condoms are made of the same material as the female condom. The female condom is another alternative to male latex condoms and should be used as directed on the package.

As soon as the penis becomes erect (hard), put the latex condom on it. If the penis is uncircumcised, pull the foreskin back before putting on the condom. Make sure you read the directions on the package.

Leave a small space in the top of the latex condom to catch the semen, or use a latex condom with a reservoir tip. Remove any air that remains in the tip by gently pressing the tip toward the base of the penis.

When you use a lubricant, check the label to make sure it is water-based. Do not use petroleum-based jelly, cold cream, baby oil, or other lubricants such as cooking oil or shortening. These weaken the latex condom and can cause it to break.



- If you feel the condom break while you are having sex, stop immediately and pull out. Do not continue until you have taken the broken condom off and put on a new condom.
- After climax (ejaculation), withdraw while the penis is still erect, holding onto the rim of the condom while pulling out so that it doesn't come off.
- Tie and wrap the condom (in paper if available); then throw in wastebasket and wash your hands.
- Never use a condom more than once.
- Don't use a condom that is brittle or that has been stored near heat or in your wallet or glove compartment for a long time. Check the package for date of expiration.
- Practice using a condom prior to being with a partner. Knowing how to use a condom before intercourse will make the whole process safer for you and your partner.
- Talk early. Scientific research shows the importance of communication about condoms prior to sexual initiation.

■ What do I do if I think I am infected with HIV?

Remember, you must have done things that put you at risk for HIV infection. Those behaviors include:

- sharing needles with an infected person
- having unprotected sex with an infected person

The only way to know if you have HIV is to be tested.

Your doctor may advise you to be counseled and tested if you have hemophilia or received a blood transfusion between 1978 and 1985. If you are worried, talk to someone about getting an HIV test that will show if you are infected. That person might be a parent, doctor, or other health care provider, or someone who works at an AIDS counseling and testing center.

Call the CDC National AIDS Hotline, 1-800-342-AIDS (2437), to find out where you can go in your area to get counseling about an HIV test. You don't have to give your name, and the call is free. You can also call your State or local health department. The number is under "Health Department" in the government section of your telephone book.



TALKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT HIV INFECTION AND AIDS

Young people today often face tough decisions about sex and drugs. Most likely, you will not be with the children you care about when they face these choices. But if you talk to them about decision-making and HIV and AIDS prevention now, you can help them resist peer pressure and make informed choices that will help protect their health, now and for the rest of their lives.



Think of Yourself as a Counselor

When talking with a young person about HIV infection and AIDS, think of your role as that of counselor, advisor, coach, best friend, or guide. Your goal: to help a young person learn how to make smart decisions about how to stay healthy and avoid infection with HIV.

Tips for Starting a Conversation

An effective way to start any conversation is to be informed first and to be a good listener and communicator. You can start talking about HIV infection and AIDS at any time and in any way you choose. If you find it awkward to raise the topic, you can look for cues that will help you. Here are some examples:

Deciding What Young People Need to Know

As an adult who knows the young people you will talk with, you are in the best position to decide what they need to know about HIV infection and AIDS.

Think carefully about their knowledge and experience. How old are the children? How much do they already know about HIV infection, AIDS, and other related subjects, such as sex and drug use? Where have they gotten their information? From friends? School? Television? You? Is it likely to be accurate? Adults should be aware that many young people think that if they talk about sex, it means that adults will think they are having sex, so many children do not ask or talk about it.

Also ask yourself these questions: Is it possible that the young people you will be talking with are sexually active? Have they tried drugs? Do they spend time with people who do these things?

In addition, consider your family's religious and cultural values. Do you want to convey these in the conversation? How will you get them across?

These are important questions. Answering them will help you stress the information that the young people in your life need to know.

School

Ask a young person what he or she is learning in health, science, or any other class about HIV infection and AIDS. Use the answer to launch your conversation.

Community

Local events, such as AIDS benefits or health fairs, can serve as handy conversation-starters. You might even propose going to such an event with a young person as an educational experience.



Children May Ask

Don't be surprised if a young person asks you directly about HIV infection and AIDS. You can also use young people's questions about related topics, such as dating or sex, to lead into a conversation about HIV infection and AIDS. Many adolescents say they know all they need to know. Be ready to explore these issues with them.

How to Keep The Conversation Running Smoothly

Talking about HIV infection and AIDS can be difficult. You may feel uncomfortable just thinking about it. That's understandable. If you are nervous or embarrassed, don't be afraid to say so. Bringing your feelings into the open can help break the tension. Besides, a young person will sense your uneasiness even if you don't mention it. Here are some suggestions.

Review the Facts

You don't have to be an expert to talk with a young person about HIV infection and AIDS. But you should understand the basic facts so that you will deliver the right information. This brochure will help you understand the key facts. Talking about the facts with another adult first may help you feel more comfortable about talking with young people. If you do not know the answer to a particular question, you can use the resources at the end of this brochure to help you find it.

Step Into a Young Person's Shoes

How did you think when you were an adolescent? Try to identify with your adolescent, but try not to parallel your childhood experiences. Think of the important differences between the world a child grows up in today and the one you grew up in; this can help you make your discussion timely and relevant. The better you understand a young person's point of view, the better you'll be able to communicate.

Have a Mutual Conversation

A conversation is an exchange of ideas and information, not a lecture. Encourage the young person you are speaking with to talk and ask questions. Ask about his or her thoughts, feelings, and activities. Show that you want to learn from a young person just as you hope he or she will learn from you.

Listen

Listen to the young person with whom you speak as closely as you hope he or she will listen to you. Stop talking if he or she wants to speak. Give him or her your full attention, and make eye contact.

Be Upbeat

Try to show a positive attitude as you lead the discussion. A critical, disapproving tone can prompt a young person to ignore you.

Don't Get Discouraged

Young people often challenge what they hear from adults. If a young person questions what you say, try not to get into an argument. Encourage the young person to check your information with another source, such as the CDC National AIDS Hotline, 1-800-342-AIDS (2437). You can also show him or her some of the information in

this guide, especially the handout for his or her age group. If your first conversation is cut short for any reason, don't give up. It is important to keep trying. If your adolescent does not want to talk, ask him or her to select alternatives — such as reading a booklet — that will provide education without the pressure of a formal discussion.

Smart Decisions: Young People Can Make Them With Your Help

Even though young people may not ask for it, they often want guidance from adults. You can offer guidance to the young people you care about by helping them develop the skills to make smart decisions — decisions about their education, their social life, their health. Just as important, you can help young people to understand that they have the ability — and the responsibility — to make the decisions that can prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Young People Do Make Decisions

Young people often feel they have no control over their lives. Adults tell them when to go to school, when to be home, when to go to bed, and when to wake up. It's important to help them see that they make decisions about their lives every day, such as what music they listen to and with whom they spend time. Point out that they also make — or will make — tough choices with serious consequences about sex and drugs.

Cause and Effect

Many young people do not fully understand the direct relationship between their decisions and the consequences that may result. In your role as a counselor or guide, you can help them see that thoughtful decisions can bring them direct benefits and save them from harsh consequences, such as HIV infection and AIDS.

Recognize Peer Pressures

Young people's decisions are often strongly influenced by pressure to conform with friends and acquaintances. Peer pressure can also cause young people to act on impulses rather than to think through their decisions.



You can help the young people with whom you speak consider the effects of peer pressure. Point out that it is okay to act according to their best judgment, not according to what friends encourage them to do. Suggest that they involve their friends in role-playing. Suggest that their friends may be testing limits and looking for support in making sound choices. Talk about the difficulties you may have had defying peer pressure. Then talk about the reasons you are glad you did, or the reasons you wish you had.

DECIDING WHAT TO SAY TO YOUNG PEOPLE

(Late Elementary and Middle School)



Since most children in this age group are not sexually active or trying drugs, you may decide that the young people you speak with do not need to know the details of how HIV is transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse and injecting drug use. However, if you think they may be considering or may be doing things that put them at risk of infection, you will need to be sure they know the risks regardless of their age.

Children this age probably have heard about AIDS and may be scared by it. Much of what they have heard may have been incorrect. To reassure them, make sure they know that they cannot become infected through everyday contact, such as going to school with someone who is infected with HIV.

Children also may have heard myths and prejudicial comments about HIV infection and AIDS. Correct any ideas that people can be infected by touching a doorknob or being bitten by a mosquito. Urge children to treat people who are infected with HIV or who have AIDS with compassion and understanding, not cruelty and anger.

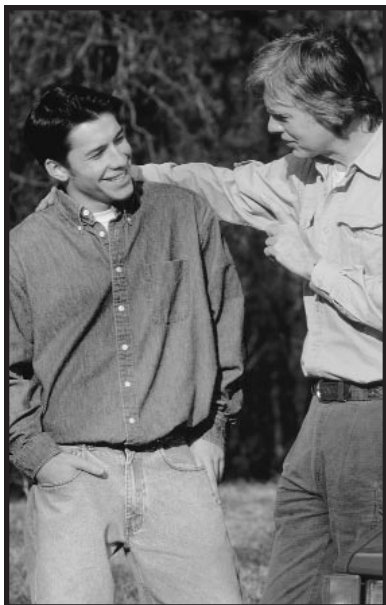
- Teach children that AIDS is a disease that has affected people of both genders and all races, ethnicities, and sexual orientations. Correcting myths and prejudices early will help children protect themselves and others from HIV infection and AIDS in the future.

Consider including the following points in a conversation about HIV infection and AIDS with children in the late elementary and middle school levels:

- AIDS is a disease caused by a tiny germ called a virus.
- Many people have AIDS today — male and female; rich and poor; white, black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American; old and young; heterosexual and homosexual.
- As of December 1996, nearly 103,000 people aged 20 to 29 had been reported with AIDS. Because a person can be infected with HIV for 2 to 12 or more years before the signs of AIDS appear, many of these young people will have been infected when they were teenagers.
- There are many myths about AIDS. (Correct some of them if you can.)
- You can become infected with HIV either by having unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person or by sharing drug needles or syringes with an infected person. Also, women infected with HIV can pass the virus to their babies during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding. There are therapies available to reduce the risk from infected mother to baby.
- A person who is infected can infect others in the ways described above, even if no symptoms are present. You cannot tell by looking at someone whether he or she is infected with HIV. An infected person can appear completely healthy.
- People who have AIDS should be treated with compassion.

DECIDING WHAT TO SAY TO TEENAGERS

(Junior and Senior High School)



Teens need to know a lot more about HIV infection and AIDS than do younger children. Teens are more likely to face choices about drug and alcohol use and sex.

Because HIV is spread through unprotected sexual intercourse or sharing drug needles and syringes, teens need to learn how to make decisions that keep themselves and others from being infected with HIV. Because alcohol and drugs can affect decisions, teens need to learn that using these substances can cause them to make decisions that can put them at risk.

Like younger children, teens also must learn to distinguish myths from facts about HIV infection and AIDS. They need to learn about the issues that the disease poses for society, such as the importance of opposing prejudice and discrimination. Discussing all of these things will help equip teens to make decisions that can prevent the spread of HIV infection and AIDS.

In a conversation with a teen, consider including the following points about making decisions, HIV infection, and AIDS (you may use them as talking points or come up with your own):

- Give a definition of AIDS. (See page 3.)
- Give a definition of HIV infection. (See page 3.)
- Point out that as of December 1996, more than 581,000 Americans had been reported as having AIDS and nearly 103,000 of them were between the ages of 20 and 29. Many of these people were infected when they were teenagers.
- Explain how HIV is transmitted from one person to another.
- Explain how to reduce the risk for HIV infection from sex.
- Explain how HIV is transmitted through drug use.
- Talk about the importance of understanding and compassion toward people with AIDS.
- Talk about the importance of eliminating prejudice and discrimination related to AIDS.

Becoming Infected Through Sexual Intercourse

Many teenagers are sexually active. Unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected partner is one way to become infected with HIV. Avoiding sexual intercourse is one sure way to avoid infection with the virus. In deciding what you want to say to a young person about sex, you may want to consider these ideas:

Delay Sexual Intercourse

You may want to bear in mind that the idea of delaying sexual activity conflicts with the many sexual messages young people encounter every day on television, in movies, at school, and from friends. Many young people conclude that “everyone is doing it.”



By discussing the benefits of delaying sex, you can help a young person make a wise and informed decision about when to become sexually active. You may wish to emphasize the following benefits of delaying sexual intercourse:

- Delaying sexual intercourse gives a person time to be sure he or she is physically and emotionally ready to adopt healthy, responsible attitudes regarding engaging in a sexual relationship.
- Delaying sexual intercourse helps prevent unintended pregnancy. Every 30 seconds a teen in the United States gets pregnant.

How to Avoid Risky Situations

Even young people who truly intend to delay sexual intercourse can have trouble refusing strong persuasion. You can help them succeed by talking with them about how to anticipate and avoid situations in which they might be pressured to have sex and how to develop skills to say no.

For instance, pressure can arise when two people are alone at one of their homes or in a car parked on “lovers’ lane.” Tell young people that when such a situation occurs, they can refuse verbally, or they can simply leave. If they cannot walk home, they can call a friend or a parent to pick them up. Advise them to have change with them at all times so that they will be able to use a public telephone.

Explain to them that no one has the right to force them to have sex, and then tell them some effective ways to refuse. You may want to consider the suggestions in the following section.

How to Say No to Risky Activities

Young people will be more likely to refuse activities that place them at risk for HIV infection if you suggest some effective ways to say no. For instance, when you talk about sex and HIV infection, discuss ways to say no to sex. You might use some of the following suggestions as talking points, or come up with your own.

- “I feel good about not having sex until I’m married. I’ve made my decision and I feel comfortable with it.”
- “I am just not ready for it yet.”
- “I know it feels right for you and I care about you. But I’m not going to do it until I’m sure it’s the right thing for me to do.”
- “I care about you but I don’t want the responsibility that comes with sex.”
- “I think sex outside of a long-term, committed relationship is wrong.”

Ask the young people you talk with to think of some of their own ways to say no and to practice them with you and their friends.

What Can They Do Instead?

Telling young people only what they shouldn’t do can make a parent sound very negative. It will be helpful to discuss some risk-free alternatives. Young people will be better able to choose safe behavior if you tell them ways to express their romantic feelings without risk of HIV infection. You can make a list of these activities and review it during your conversation. Ask the young people you talk with to suggest some of their own ideas.

If you think a young person you know has a drug problem, get professional help now. Contact your doctor, local health department, or social service agency to find out who can help you in your community. Call the 24-hour Hotline of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) to find out where you can get help in your area.

If You Think a Teen Is Sexually Active

Short of abstaining from sex, the best way to protect oneself from STDs such as HIV infection, is to use a latex condom consistently and correctly every time one has sex. It is crucial that people understand that the more sex partners they have, the greater their risk of getting an STD such as HIV.

You can also help young people avoid dangerous sexual decisions by stressing that young people should avoid making decisions about sex while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. These substances impair judgment and lower inhibitions, and people with clouded judgment are more likely to take sexual risks that will increase their chance of HIV infection. You may wish to discuss the importance of using a latex condom. Such discussion may help young people make wise decisions that will reduce the risk of HIV infection during sexual intercourse. Latex condoms provide a barrier and, if used correctly and consistently, greatly reduce the risk of infection with STDs, including HIV. People who decide to be sexually active outside a mutually faithful, long-term relationship with an uninfected partner should understand the importance of using a latex condom consistently and correctly every time they have sex.

For more detailed information about how to use a latex condom, read the part of this guide called “Common Questions, Accurate Answers.” (See page 8).

Preventing HIV Transmission Caused by Needle Sharing

HIV often spreads among people who share needles, syringes, and other drug preparation “works” with other people. If you know young people who use needles for a medical reason (such as people with hemophilia or diabetes), make sure they use and dispose of their needles properly. Needles should be used only under a doctor’s order and should never be shared.

In your role of counselor or guide, it is vital that you urge young people not to use drugs. Many drug users face a short, bleak future — jail, hospitalization, or an early grave — and drug use increases their risk of HIV infection.

If you talk with a young person about drug use and HIV infection, talk about peer pressure and self-esteem issues. You might suggest some of the following ways to resist peer pressure, or use examples of your own:

- “I just don’t want to take drugs.”
- “I don’t want to lose my job. Drugs and work don’t mix.”
- “I want to be a good athlete. Drugs will harm my body.”
- “I want to go to college. I can’t risk getting hooked on drugs.”
- “I want to join the Army. Drugs could blow my chances.”
- “Drugs are illegal. I won’t break the law.”
- “When I take drugs, I don’t feel in control. I don’t like that feeling.”
- “I love my life too much to do drugs.”
- “I don’t want to waste my time. It’s not my idea of fun.”

Information For Young People

You may have heard about a disease called AIDS. A lot of people have been talking about it lately. Many people have gotten AIDS in the past few years. A lot of them have died.

AIDS is a condition that weakens the body's power to fight off sickness. It's a very serious medical problem. That's why people are talking about it. But sometimes people talk without knowing the facts.

AIDS is caused by a tiny germ. Doctors call a germ like this a virus. The virus that causes AIDS is called the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

The key thing for you to understand about AIDS is that it is not easy to get through the things you do every day. You cannot "catch" AIDS as you can a cold or the chickenpox. You cannot get AIDS from doing things like going to school, using a bathroom, or riding in a school bus.

It is important to know the facts about AIDS. You can be a leader by knowing the truth.

All of the following statements about AIDS are true. Read them. Remember them. When you hear something about AIDS that isn't true, speak up. Say that you know the facts. Tell people the truth.

- You cannot get AIDS from the things you do every day, such as going to school, using a toilet, or drinking from a glass.
- You cannot get AIDS from sitting next to someone in school who has AIDS.
- You cannot get AIDS from a kiss on the cheek, or from touching or hugging someone who is infected.
- You cannot get AIDS from a mosquito or any other kind of insect. The virus that causes AIDS dies inside of bugs, so there is no way they can give it to you.
- You can become infected with HIV either by having sex with an infected person without using a latex condom consistently and correctly or by sharing drug needles or syringes with an infected person. Also, women infected with HIV can spread the virus to their babies during pregnancy, during birth, or through breastfeeding. There are medicines available to reduce the chances of HIV's being transmitted from an infected mother to her baby.
- A person who is infected can infect others during sex, even if the infected person is not sick. You cannot tell by looking at someone whether he or she is infected with HIV. An infected person can look and feel completely healthy.
- You can play with someone who has HIV or AIDS just as you can with any of your other friends. This will not make you sick. As with anyone, always be careful when you get playground cuts and scrapes or play sports. Also, you should not become "blood brothers" or "blood sisters." This is when two people each cut or stick their fingers and mix their blood together.

- Many people have AIDS — male and female; rich and poor; white, black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American; young and old; heterosexual and homosexual.
- As of December 1996, nearly 103,000 people aged 20 to 29 had been found to have AIDS. Because a person can be infected with the virus that causes AIDS for 2 to 12 or more years before the signs of AIDS appear, scientists believe that many of these young people were infected when they were teenagers.
- Treat a person with AIDS just as you would treat anyone else. If he or she is sick, then treat him or her the way you would want to be treated when you don't feel well.

SEE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW ABOUT HIV INFECTION AND AIDS

1. What is the name of the disease that weakens the body's power to fight off illness?
2. What is the name of the virus that causes AIDS?
3. Check all of the things that cannot infect you with HIV:
 - ___ a toilet
 - ___ a kiss on the cheek
 - ___ a drinking glass
 - ___ a mosquito
 - ___ going to school with someone who is infected with HIV
 - ___ helping someone who is infected with HIV or who has AIDS

Answers to Quiz
 1. AIDS 2. HIV 3. All of the items should be checked. They cannot infect you with HIV.

Information For Teenagers

As of December 1996, nearly 103,000 people between the ages of 20 and 29 had been reported with AIDS. Many of them probably were infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, when they were teenagers.

There are things that put you at risk for getting infected with HIV. For instance, the virus that causes AIDS can be passed from one person to another through unprotected sexual intercourse (sex without using a latex condom consistently and correctly every time). Today a teen in the United States gets pregnant every 30 seconds — that's about the same amount of time it takes to watch a television commercial. Every 11 seconds a teen in the United States gets a sexually transmitted disease (STD) such as gonorrhea or chlamydia. The same sexual activities that cause pregnancy and spread STDs can infect you with HIV.

There are other ways besides sex that teens can get HIV. To find out how to protect yourself and your friends, read on.

What Is AIDS?

AIDS stands for acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is a condition in which the body's immune system — the system that fights off sickness — breaks down. Because the immune system fails, a person with AIDS can develop a variety of life-threatening illnesses.

What Is HIV Infection?

AIDS is caused by a virus that scientists call human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV. A virus is a small germ that can cause disease.

If HIV enters your body, you may become infected with HIV. From the time a person is infected, he or she can infect others, even if no symptoms are present. A test using blood or fluids from inside the mouth can be done to find the antibodies that would mean someone had HIV infection.

HIV can be in a person's body for years without producing any symptoms, and the person can look and feel healthy during those years. Most of the people infected with HIV know that they are infected because they have been tested for HIV antibodies. Even if no symptoms are present, anyone infected with HIV should be under a doctor's care.

People infected with HIV can develop many health problems. These can include extreme weight loss, severe pneumonia, certain forms of cancer, and damage to the nervous system. These illnesses signal the onset of AIDS. In some people these illnesses may develop within a year or two. Others may stay healthy for 2 to 12 or more years before symptoms appear. Get tested if you have engaged in behaviors that include:

- having sexual intercourse — vaginal, anal, or oral — with an infected person
- sharing needles or syringes with an infected person
- receiving a blood transfusion prior to 1985

What Is the Difference Between HIV and AIDS?

HIV infection and AIDS are serious health problems. AIDS is the result of a long process that begins when someone is infected with HIV. A person will not develop AIDS unless he or she has been infected with HIV. By preventing HIV infection, we can prevent future cases of AIDS.

How Does Someone Become Infected With HIV?

People can become infected with HIV:

- by having unprotected (without a condom) sex (anal, vaginal, or oral) with someone with HIV
- by sharing needles or syringes with someone with HIV
- from a mother with HIV to her baby before or during birth or through breastfeeding
- from a blood transfusion or bloodclotting factors before 1985

How Do People Get HIV Through Sex?

HIV can be spread through unprotected sexual intercourse from male to female, female to male, male to male, or female to female. Unprotected sexual intercourse means sexual intercourse without correct and consistent use of a latex condom or any other physical barrier to HIV (such as the female condom).

HIV may be in an infected person's blood, semen, or vaginal secretions. It can enter the body through certain types of tissues, especially the tissues that line the inside of the vagina, anus, and penis. It can also enter through cuts or tears (some of which may already be present, and some of which may occur during intercourse) in the vagina, penis, rectum, or mouth. HIV is transmitted by anal, vaginal, or oral sexual intercourse with a person who is infected with HIV.

If someone has an STD such as syphilis or gonorrhea, he or she is at risk of becoming infected with HIV. There are two reasons for this. One is that the person is involved in the same behaviors that spread HIV. The other reason is that some STDs cause sores on the body — usually the already vulnerable soft tissues of the penis, vagina, and rectum. The presence of these sores can make it easier for the virus to enter the body.

Since many infected people have no symptoms, it's hard to be sure who is or is not infected with HIV. The more sex partners someone has without using condoms, the greater his or her chances are of encountering one who is infected, and becoming infected. Anybody can have HIV...of either gender and of any race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. And no matter how healthy or attractive a person is, he or she could still be infected with HIV.

How Do You Get HIV From Sharing Needles?

Sharing needles with another person — even once — is a very easy way to become infected with HIV. Whether you inject drugs or steroids, you risk becoming infected with HIV if you share needles or syringes. Blood from an infected person can stay in a needle or syringe and then be transmitted to the next person who uses it.

Important Questions

How can you tell if the person you are dating or would like to date has been infected with HIV? The simple answer is, you can't. But as long as sexual intercourse and sharing needles are avoided, it doesn't matter.

If you are thinking about becoming sexually involved with someone, here are some important questions to consider:

- Has this person had any sexually transmitted diseases?
- How many people has he or she had sex with? Has he or she experimented with drugs?
- Has this person been tested for HIV antibodies?

These are sensitive questions. But they are important, and you have a responsibility to ask. If your potential partner answers no or does not know the answer to any or all of the questions, think seriously about the consequences before you engage in sexual intercourse. Additionally, each person can be tested in order to be certain of current HIV status.

You should think of it this way: If you know someone well enough to have sex, the two of you should be able to talk about HIV infection and AIDS. If you are placed in a situation where you or your partner is too uncomfortable, too uninformed, or simply unable to talk about safe sex, then you should not engage in sex with that person. Open communication is one of the first steps to making sex safer.

How Can I Avoid HIV Infection?

Don't Do Drugs of Any Kind

Sharing drug equipment — especially needles — with another person to inject drugs can infect you. And many drugs, especially alcohol, can affect your judgment and cause you to do things that place you at risk for HIV infection.

Delay Sexual Intercourse

Don't have sex. Not having sex is the only sure protection. Wait to have sex until you are in a long-term, mutually faithful relationship with an uninfected partner. By choosing not to have sex, you:

- Help guarantee your safety from all sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection.
- Give yourself more time to be sure you are physically and emotionally ready to engage in a sexual relationship.
- Give yourself more time to learn and understand more about the physical and emotional aspects of sexual relationships.
- Prevent unintended pregnancy. Remember, every 30 seconds a teen in the United States gets pregnant.

When You Decide You Are Ready to Have Sex, It's Safer if You Do So With Only One Uninfected Partner in a Mutually Faithful, Long-Term Relationship.

If you have sex, use a latex condom each and every time you have sex (anal, vaginal, or oral). Be certain to read the directions located on the package to ensure that you are using the condom consistently and correctly. Remember that female condoms are also available.

Make decisions about sex while you are not under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. These substances can affect your judgment and cause you to do things that risk infection with HIV.

How Else Can I Help Stop AIDS?

If you've read this far, you know the facts about HIV infection and AIDS. You'd be surprised at how many people don't know them. A lot of people believe all sorts of myths about AIDS — myths that can be very harmful.

These myths can cause people to unknowingly put themselves, and others, at risk of infection. They can also cause people to treat others unfairly. For instance, some people incorrectly think that AIDS only affects certain groups of people. Because they fear AIDS, they do cruel things to people in those groups. It's not what kind of person you are, it's what you do that can spread HIV.

We can work together to make sure that such prejudice and unfair treatment don't happen. Now that you know the facts about HIV infection and AIDS, you can tell others the truth and speak out against myths and prejudice. The reality behind these myths is that AIDS does not discriminate and can attack anyone's immune system.

What's more, people infected with HIV and those with AIDS can use your help. If you know someone who has AIDS, you can give compassion, friendship, or other help without fear of infection from contact that doesn't involve blood, semen, or vaginal secretions.

Even if you don't know anyone who is infected, you can join your community's effort to stop AIDS. You can volunteer your time with a local health organization, youth group, or religious group that has an HIV and AIDS program. Or you can contribute just by telling your friends about HIV. Who knows? You just may save someone's life.

Do You Know The Facts About HIV Infection And AIDS?

1. HIV can be spread through which of the following?
 A. insect bites
 B. everyday contact
 C. sharing drug needles
 D. sexual intercourse
2. You can tell by looking whether a person is infected with HIV.
 TRUE
 FALSE
3. From the time a person is infected with HIV, he or she can infect others through sex or drugs.
 TRUE
 FALSE
4. Helping people infected with HIV or people with AIDS with their daily tasks does not put you at risk of infection.
 TRUE
 FALSE
5. Babies can be infected by their mothers during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding.
 TRUE
 FALSE
6. If you have sexual intercourse only with members of the opposite sex, you cannot be infected with HIV.
 TRUE
 FALSE
7. If they are used consistently and correctly every time you have sex, latex condoms can prevent the spread of HIV.
 TRUE
 FALSE
8. The more sex partners you have without using condoms, the greater your chances of becoming infected with HIV.
 TRUE
 FALSE
9. If you think you've been exposed to HIV, you should seek HIV counseling and be tested.
 TRUE
 FALSE

1. C and D 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. False 7. True 8. True 9. True

Answers to Quiz

WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

National Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National AIDS Hotline, 1-800-342-AIDS (2437), offers 24-hour service seven days a week to respond to any questions that you or a young person may have about HIV infection and AIDS. All calls are free, and you need not give your name. The service is available in Spanish (1-800-344-7432) and using a TTY machine for the deaf (1-800-243-7889).

Hotline information specialists can refer you to groups in your area that work professionally on HIV infection and AIDS issues. Also, they can direct you to local HIV counseling and testing centers and tell you where to get additional materials.

For additional copies of this guide and other publications on AIDS and HIV infection, you can call the CDC National Prevention Information Network (1-800-458-5231) or write to the NPIN at P.O. Box 6003, Rockville, MD 20849.

CDC's Business and Labor Resource Service (BLRS) provides information, materials, and referrals for employers on national, State, and local resources related to HIV/AIDS in the workplace. Its reference specialists can assist employers in identifying appropriate materials, resources, and programs for employees. A variety of educational materials (posters, brochures, guidelines, and videos) suitable for the workplace are available. The Resource Service can also provide information on other organizations such as public health departments, civic organizations, and local AIDS service organizations that provide workplace programs in local communities. The Resource Service is available from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. E.S.T. It can be reached by calling 1-800-458-5231. The fax number is 1-888-282-7681. Or visit the BLRS home page at www.brta-lrta.org

State and Local Health Departments

If you have questions about AIDS prevention efforts in your community, the CDC National AIDS Hotline can tell you how to reach your State or local health department. Also, you can find the number listed under "Health Department" in the local or State government section of your telephone book. You can also contact your local AIDS agencies.

Community Organizations

Thousands of local organizations, such as the PTA, March of Dimes, National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, Boys' Clubs and Girls' Clubs, and United Way of America are working hard to stop the spread of HIV infection. To find out about such organizations in your community, look for them by name in the telephone book or call your local health department.

You can also contact your local American Red Cross chapter. The toll-free number is 1-800-375-2040.

Schools

Talk to your local school board, superintendent, principal, teachers, or guidance counselors to find out about the HIV and AIDS education programs that your local school offers and how you can help to make them work. Make sure they know that you support learning about preventing HIV infection and AIDS as part of comprehensive health education in school.

The Health Care Team

If you have concerns about your health or the health of your child, share them with a doctor, nurse, or other health care provider.

The information in this publication is solely for general information and for educational purposes and is not intended to be legal advice. Businesses and individuals should consult an attorney for specific legal advice.