



# What is HIV & AIDS?

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**Revised October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

# Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I live and work on Treaty 6 Territory, the Homeland of the Dakota & Métis. I pay my respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.





# Why are we learning about this today?



- Education and awareness is important in the fight against the spread of HIV. It is also imperative that we have understanding, compassion and respect for people who live with HIV.
- Ending the Stigma that has been attached to this virus will encourage and empower people living with HIV to have a voice and come forward to share how their lives have been impacted and how they are living with HIV now.
- Sharing knowledge makes our communities stronger and more efficient at handling any challenges that come our way.





# What is HIV?

- First, please take a moment and think about what comes to mind when you think of the word HIV? Or AIDS?
- It is important to be aware of our assumptions and potential bias's. It is also significant to realize that we all can improve our knowledge and understanding. We are lifelong learners.
- This purpose of this presentation is to give you more awareness of HIV & AIDS information which will then help to reduce fear & stigma in our communities.

# What is HIV?

- HIV stands for ***Human Immunodeficiency Virus***
- It is a virus that attacks the immune system. If left untreated it will cripple a persons ability to defend themselves against sickness and turn into AIDS.
- HIV is treatable but is not curable. People with HIV live long healthy lives with treatment.
- You can have HIV without knowing it, that's why its so important to get tested regularly.

# Who can get HIV?

- Anyone...no matter your age, sex, gender or sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin.



# How does a person get HIV?

- HIV can only be passed by these five body fluids:
  - Blood
  - Semen (including pre-cum)
  - Rectal fluid
  - Vaginal fluid
  - Breast milk

HIV can only be passed when virus in one of these fluids gets into the bloodstream of an HIV-negative person-through broken skin, the opening of the penis or the wet linings of the body, such as the vagina, rectum, or foreskin. HIV cannot be passed through healthy, unbroken skin.



# The two main ways HIV can be passed are:

- Through sex
- By sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs (including steroids or hormones).
- HIV can also be passed:
  - to a fetus or baby during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding
  - By sharing needles or ink to get a tattoo
  - By sharing needles or jewelry to get a body piercing
  - By sharing acupuncture needles

# HIV cannot be passed by:

- Shaking hands, working or eating with someone who has HIV
- Hugs or kisses
- Coughs, sneezes or spitting
- Swimming pools, toilet seats or water fountains
- Insects or animals

*\* Since Nov 1985, all blood products in Canada are tested for HIV. There is no chance of getting HIV from blood transfusion or from donating blood.*



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# HIV & Sex

HIV can be passed during sex. But there are ways to protect yourself and your sex partners:

- **Condoms and Lube** - Use a new condom every time you have sex. This will help protect you from HIV and other STI's (sexually transmitted infections), such as gonorrhea and syphilis. Use only water or silicone-based lubricants; oil based lubricants can make a condom break.
- **HIV treatment** – If you have HIV and are not on HIV treatment, talk to your health care provider about getting started. HIV drugs can protect your health and prevent HIV transmission to others. When a person is compliant with their HIV medications, and has a suppressed viral load, they do not pass HIV during sex.



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# HIV & Sex continued...

- **PrEP** – If you are HIV-negative and at higher risk for HIV, you might be a candidate for PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis). PrEP involves an HIV-negative person taking certain HIV drugs to reduce the risk of getting HIV. A person starts PrEP before being exposed to HIV. Talk to your health care provider for more information on this medication.
- **PEP** – If you are HIV-negative and may have been exposed to HIV, you can take PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis). PEP drugs must be started as soon as possible (within 72 hours of being exposed to HIV) and need to be taken for 28 days. A person starts PEP after being exposed to HIV.



# HIV & Sex continued...

- **NOT sharing sex toys** – Avoid sharing sex toys (and if you do, cover the toy with a new condom before each use). It is also important to clean your toys between vaginal and anal use.
- Choosing oral sex, masturbation and forms of sexual stimulation that pose little or no risk of HIV.

**People can have HIV or other STI's without knowing it because these infections often do not cause symptoms.** Don't assume that you or your partner knows if they have HIV or any other STI. The only way to know for certain is to get tested.



# HIV & Pregnancy

- Without proper treatment and care, HIV can be passed from a pregnant person to their baby during:
  - Pregnancy
  - Birth
  - Breastfeeding
- If you are pregnant or thinking about getting pregnant, get tested for HIV.
- If you are HIV-positive, with proper treatment and care, you CAN have a healthy baby. If you are not on treatment when you first get pregnant, starting HIV treatment as soon as possible will dramatically lower the chance of passing HIV to your baby.
- To prevent transmission after your baby is born, Canadian guidelines recommend feeding your baby with formula instead of breastfeeding.



# HIV & Drug Use

- HIV can be passed by sharing needles and other drug equipment. This can also spread hepatitis B and C.
- If you use drugs, there are things you can do to protect yourself and use drugs in a safer way. This is called **Harm Reduction**.



# HIV & Drug Use continued...

- To practice safer drug use:
  - Use a new needle and syringe every time inject drugs. Get new needles and supplies from your local harm reduction program.
  - Never share drug equipment (such as cookers, filters, water, alcohol swabs, pipes, straws), not even with your sex partner. Use your own drug equipment every single time.
  - Get tested for HIV and hepatitis viruses regularly. If you do test positive for HIV, Hep B or C, talk to your health care provider about getting on treatment. The sooner the better so there is little damage done to your health and so transmission of the virus is decreased.



# How is HIV Treated?

- HIV is treated with HIV medications. These medications are prescribed by certain health care professionals. They cannot get rid of the HIV but they can keep it under control or as some people describe it as “putting the virus to sleep”.
- If you are diagnosed with HIV, the sooner you start treatment, the better it is for your health. Taking HIV medications exactly as prescribed and maintaining a suppressed viral load also prevents HIV transmission.



# AIDS

- Without HIV treatment, your immune system can become too weak to fight off serious illnesses, and you can eventually become sick with life-threatening infections and cancers. This is called AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). But thanks to very effective HIV treatment, these days most people with HIV will never get AIDS.

# HIV Testing

- HIV testing involves taking blood taken from your arm or a drop of blood taken from your finger.
- After HIV enters the body it may take time before the test can detect the virus (this is also called the window period). Your health care provider will let you know when it will be best to test based on the sensitivity of the test and the date of your last exposure.
- Some people can have flu-like symptoms when they first get HIV (fever, sore throat or swollen glands). But many people have no symptoms at all. You can have HIV and not know it.
- Don't wait, speak to your health care provider about getting tested for HIV along with other STI's.



# What if I test positive?

- There have been many significant advances in the treatment of HIV. With the right treatment and care, you can stay healthy and not pass HIV to the people you have sex with.
- To protect yourself and your partners, practice safer sex and avoid sharing drug equipment.
- Reach out to your local community clinic to ask for support and education.
- There are also great online resources such as:
  - [www.catie.ca](http://www.catie.ca)
  - [www.HIV411.ca](http://www.HIV411.ca)
  - <https://sexlifesask.ca/local-clinics>
  - [www.Aidsnetworksaskatoon.ca](http://www.Aidsnetworksaskatoon.ca)
  - [www.nitha.com](http://www.nitha.com)





# HIV Basics Video - CATIE

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAgFgcwC\\_tI&t=11s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAgFgcwC_tI&t=11s)



# The sooner you know, the better.

Starting treatment as soon as possible helps people with HIV to live long and healthy lives. Treatment also helps prevent passing HIV to others. The first step is to get tested.



For information about HIV testing, go to [CATIE.ca](https://www.catie.ca)



What is HIV & AIDS?

# World AIDS Day

Every year on December 1st, the world unites to commemorate World AIDS Day. This annual event serves as a reminder of the global struggle to end HIV-related stigma, an opportunity to honor those we have lost, and a rallying cry to continue working toward a day when HIV is no longer a public health threat.

In 2023, we mark the 35th commemoration of this important day with the theme “***World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit***”.



**WORLD AIDS DAY 35**  
Remember and Commit



What is HIV & AIDS?

# World Aids Day: *Remember & Commit*

- This year's theme, “**World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit,**” pays tribute to those we have lost to HIV/AIDS. The impact of this epidemic has been profound, affecting individuals, families, and entire communities across the globe. Remembering the lives lost not only honors their memory but also emphasizes the urgency of our commitment to end the HIV epidemic.
- Through “**Remembrance**”, we draw strength and determination to redouble our efforts in fighting the disease and providing support to those with HIV. It's time to remind ourselves of the importance of compassion, empathy, and solidarity in the face of adversity.



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# World Aids Day: *Remember & Commit*

- The other aspect of this year’s theme, “**Commit**,” emphasizes our collective responsibility to act. Each one of us can make a difference, whether through ***working to improve health equity and ending the disparities in access to prevention, care, and treatment; promoting scientific education and awareness; or supporting organizations that work tirelessly to serve those at risk and living with HIV—we need a whole of society response to win.***



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## References

- HIV Basics Brochure, CATIE (Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange), 2016, Canada's source for HIV and hepatitis C information.
- Sexually transmitted Infections Brochure, Feb 2020, Public Health Agency of Canada
- <http://www.bccdc.ca/>
- <https://www.hiv.gov/blog/world-aids-day-35-remember-and-commit/>



**Thank you.  
Do you have any questions?**