

KEEP YOURSELF SAFE

ALWAYS USE CONDOMS

- Using condoms for vaginal sex protects you from HIV, Hepatitis B and C and other sexually transmitted infections and prevents pregnancy.
- Using condoms for anal sex protects you from HIV, Hepatitis B and C and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Using condoms for oral sex protects you from HIV and sexually transmitted infections that can be caught orally.



USE BACKUP CONTRACEPTION

If a condom bursts

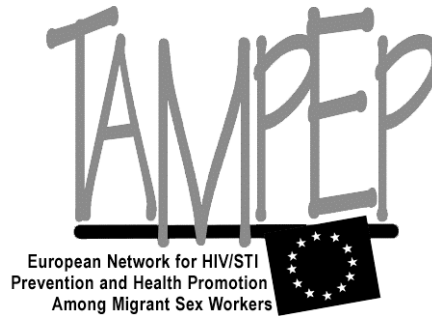
- If you have not been using **backup contraception**, get emergency contraceptive within 72 hours. You can get it from a family planning service.
- If you know your partner(s) have an infection or they have any symptoms then go for a medical check up immediately, the doctor may provide preventive treatment.
- Go for a **sexual health check up** two to seven days after the condom burst.

GOING FOR MEDICAL CHECK UPS

- Always follow a doctor's advice regarding the risk of infection.
- If you have had a burst condom always tell the doctor about any symptoms your partner had, the doctor may be able to offer you a preventive treatment.

LOOK AFTER YOUR BODY

- If you have a discharge, other symptoms or have abdominal pain, go for a sexual health check up.
- Don't self prescribe; get a medical check up to ensure correct treatment.
- Always complete any course of treatment prescribed by a doctor, otherwise the infection may come back.
- Go for regular sexual health check ups or when you have a condom burst or unsafe sex.



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ENGLISH
HIV & AIDS



For more information:



About HIV & AIDS

- **AIDS** (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is caused by a virus called **HIV** (Human Immune-deficiency Virus).
- There may be no symptoms in the early stages of an HIV infection. An individual can be infected with HIV and show no symptoms but still infect others.
- HIV is dangerous because over time the virus destroys the immune system and our bodies cannot fight off and recover from many illnesses and infections.
- AIDS develops when the immune system is weak and the body becomes susceptible to many illnesses and infections, which can be fatal.
- **There is no vaccine against HIV yet.**

The transmission of HIV

- HIV can be transmitted through **BLOOD, SEMEN, VAGINAL FLUID** and **MATERNAL MILK**.
- The virus has to enter the bloodstream for a person to become infected.

HOW HIV CAN BE TRANSMITTED

- By having vaginal or anal sex without a condom.
- By sharing injecting equipment and paraphernalia during drug use.
- By getting semen in the mouth.
- By unhygienic tattooing and body piercing.
- By licking the vagina during menstruation.
- By unscreened blood transfusions and blood products.
- From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, childbirth and/or breastfeeding. In order to reduce the risk of the child being infected, a caesarean will be necessary.

If you have been at risk of HIV infection then you should think about getting an HIV test.

The HIV test

- Only a blood test can determine if an individual has been infected with HIV.
- When HIV enters a person's body, special chemicals are produced that are the body response to an infection. They are called antibodies. **The blood test looks for HIV antibodies.** It usually takes between 3 to 12 weeks for the antibodies to develop. Therefore you can go for a HIV test 3 weeks after you believe you may have been at risk of infection and repeat it 12 weeks later (about 3 months).
- **If a person has antibodies in her/his blood, it means that she/he has been infected with the HI Virus.**
- The time between infection and the development of antibodies is called the window period. In the window period people are infected with HIV and have no antibodies in their blood which can be detected by an HIV test. However, the person may already have high levels of HIV in her/his blood, sexual fluids or breast milk and can infect others.
- **REMEMBER! A person during the window period (before the antibodies develop) can infect others with HIV!**
- If the result is positive, which means that the person has been infected by HIV, a second test will normally be done to confirm the result.



HIV antibodies NEGATIVE test result means:

- That **NO** antibodies to HIV were found in the blood test.
- **But remember:** as the antibodies take up to three months to show up in a blood test, it only proves that the person was not infected three months ago.

HIV antibodies POSITIVE

test result means:

- That antibodies to HIV were found in the blood test.
- Some people report flu like symptoms immediately after infection. Other symptoms however, can take years to appear.
- People who are HIV POSITIVE normally develop AIDS when they take no antiretroviral medicine.
- A person will stay HIV POSITIVE forever.
- People who are HIV POSITIVE but do not have AIDS, can still infect others with the virus.
- **HIV is treatable** with antiretroviral medication **but it is not curable.**
- If a person is HIV infected, she/he can be super infected with another HI-Virus, which complicates the treatment so even if both you and your partners are infected you should practice safe sex..

Symptoms & treatment

Symptoms can take years to appear, but the person can still infect others during this period. Each individual responds differently to HIV infection but symptoms can include - persistent herpes and fungal infections, severe tiredness, night sweats, fever, extreme weight loss, persistent diarrhoea, red/purple/brown marks on the skin or the mouth.

There is no cure for HIV infection and AIDS. Antiviral treatments have been developed that are effective in improving the health of people living with HIV and increasing life expectancy. Antiviral treatments aim to prevent the virus from duplicating and causing more damage to the immune system. They must be taken everyday for the rest of the person's life and some have difficult side effects. Not everyone responds well to antiviral treatment and not everyone wants to take antiviral treatment. People living with HIV need to be seen regularly by a specialist to check the extent of damage to their immune system and what the best course of treatment is likely to be.

If you know someone living with HIV it is safe to:

- Share glasses, plates, the same bed and toilet.
- Touch sweat or tears.
- Shake hands.
- Touch and kiss.
- Have non-penetrative sex.
- Have protected oral, vaginal and anal sex using condoms and lubricant.