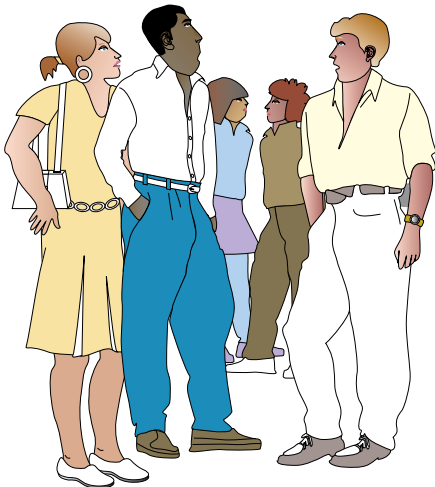


Quick Information for Your Health

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

How To Protect Yourself From Aids



About HIV And AIDS

AIDS is a disease that can be deadly. It is caused by a virus called HIV.

The most common ways to get AIDS are:

- having sex with a person who has HIV or AIDS
- sharing drug needles with someone who has HIV or AIDS.

You can also get HIV from a blood transfusion, if the HIV is in the blood. But that is rare. Strict rules about who can donate blood and tests on donated blood make transfusions very safe.

You cannot get HIV by donating blood. You cannot get HIV just by being in the same room with an infected person, or just by shaking hands or hugging an infected person.

In the last few years, AIDS has increased most among women, blacks, and Hispanics.



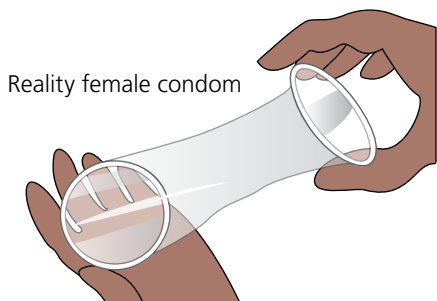
Sex, Condoms, And AIDS

If you or your partner has had sex with someone else, you both could get AIDS.

In the United States, women are more likely to get HIV from men than the other way around. Latex condoms are the best way to keep from getting HIV during sex. If you or your partner is allergic to latex, there are condoms made of polyurethane that can protect against HIV, too.

But natural membrane condoms, also called lambskin condoms, do not prevent HIV because the virus can pass through them.

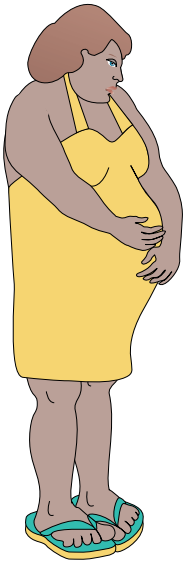
If a man can't or won't use a condom, a woman can use the Reality female condom. It may protect against HIV, but it's not as good as the latex condom a man uses. Do not use a Reality female condom along with a male condom. Both condoms will not stay in place when used together.



Latex and polyurethane condoms are the only birth control products that protect against HIV. So even if you're using another kind of birth control—like the Pill, IUD, cervical cap, Norplant, Depo-Provera, or diaphragm—the man must still use a condom if you want protection against HIV.

Find Out If You Have HIV

You can find out if you have HIV at home with a test kit available at drugstores



without a doctor's prescription. To use the test, you prick your finger to get a blood sample. Then you send the sample to the address given in the directions. You don't have to give your name. Be aware, though, that other tests, sometimes called rapid HIV test kits, have been advertised and sold over the Internet and elsewhere. These kits do not require you to send the tests to a lab. The FDA has not approved these tests and they may not be accurate.

Your doctor's office or clinic is a good place to get a test for HIV.

If the test says that you have HIV, ask your doctor or clinic:

- Do I need more tests?
- Do I need to start treatment?
- Do I need to make any lifestyle changes at this time?

If you think you may be pregnant, find out right away if you have HIV.

Treatment early in pregnancy can greatly reduce the chance that your baby will have HIV.

The FDA has approved many drugs to treat HIV and AIDS. They can help people with HIV or AIDS feel better for a longer time. But there is nothing yet that will cure AIDS.

Guard Against Other Illnesses

If you are infected with HIV, tell your doctor or clinic if your symptoms get worse or if you get any new symptoms. They may try a different treatment. To avoid germs in food that could make you much sicker, follow these food safety rules:

- When you handle food, wash your hands and kitchen utensils with hot water and soap.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- Make sure milk, dairy products, and juices are pasteurized.
- Cook eggs and seafood well. Never eat them raw.



How To Use A Condom:

- Make sure the condom package label says the condom can be used to prevent HIV.
- Look for the expiration date on the condom package. Don't use the condom if the date has already passed.
- Read the directions to make sure you know the right way to put the condom on and take it off.
- Use a condom every time you have any kind of sex—vaginal, anal, or oral.
- Put the condom on as soon as the penis is erect, and remove it right after ejaculation.
- Don't use a condom from a torn or open package.
- Don't use a condom that's gummy, brittle, discolored, or has even a tiny hole.
- Don't get oil-based lubricants, such as Vaseline, cold cream, or baby oil, on a condom. These could cause the condom to tear. If you use lubricants, make sure they're water-based, such as K-Y Jelly.





Watch Out For 'Miracle Cures'

Some treatments for AIDS are advertised as miracle cures or as having some "secret ingredient."

They are not approved by the FDA. They have not been scientifically tested. There is no proof that they work. They could even hurt you. Don't use anything to treat HIV or AIDS unless your doctor or clinic says it is OK.

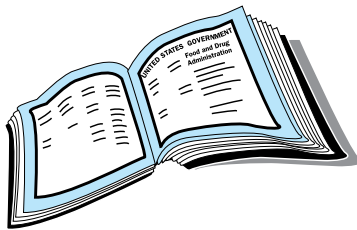
Studies Of Unproven AIDS Medicines

Many medicines are being tested in scientific studies to see if they are safe and if they work against HIV and AIDS. Sometimes people with HIV or AIDS can get these experimental medicines by joining the studies. To find out about them, you or your doctor can call (800) TRIALS-A (874-2572).

Remember:

The best ways to keep from getting AIDS are:

- Have sex only with one person who has never had sex with anyone but you. If you are a teen-ager and unmarried, the safest way is not to have sex at all.
- Don't use illegal drugs.



Do You Have More Questions?

Ask your doctor. And ask the FDA. There may be an FDA office near you. Look for the number in the blue pages of the phone book.

If you have any questions about AIDS, call (800) 342-2437 or (800) 344-7432 (Spanish). For the hearing impaired, call (800) AIDS-TTY (243-7889).

You can also call the FDA on its toll-free number, (888) INFO-FDA (463-6332).

Or look on the Internet at www.fda.gov

The Food and Drug Administration is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that makes sure blood transfusions and medicines for HIV, AIDS, and other illnesses work and are safe.

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