



**THE BASICS OF HIV**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

**PrEP**  
(Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis)  
30 tablets

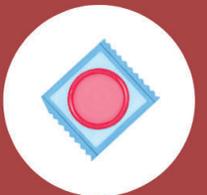
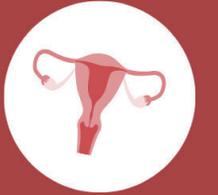
## WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

### Public Health Clinics offer:

- Free HIV testing
- STD testing and treatment
- HIV treatment and support
- Free condoms

To learn more about HIV and STIs:  
[ph.lacounty.gov/chs/education.htm](http://ph.lacounty.gov/chs/education.htm)

To locate a Sexual Health Clinic near you:  
[ph.lacounty.gov/chs/sexualhealthclinics/](http://ph.lacounty.gov/chs/sexualhealthclinics/)



## SHOULD I GET TESTED FOR HIV?

**Yes!** Testing is the only way to know your HIV status.

You should get tested if:

- You had sex without a condom
- You shared needles
- Your partner has HIV
- You are pregnant
- You don't know your partner's HIV status

**Testing is fast, easy, confidential, and often free at public health clinics.**

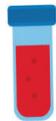


## HIV TESTING OPTIONS

Your provider can help choose the right test for you.



**Rapid Test:**  
Fingerstick blood test, results in minutes



**Lab Test (4th-generation):**  
Blood test, results in a few days



**NAT/Viral Load Test:**  
Used to confirm HIV infection

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## WHAT IS HIV?

HIV stands for **Human Immunodeficiency Virus**.

HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system. Your immune system helps your body fight off illness. When HIV damages the immune system, it becomes easier to get sick.

There is **no cure** for HIV, but treatment works very well. With the right medicine, people with HIV can live **long, healthy lives**.



## WHAT IS PREP?

PrEP is a daily pill that helps prevent HIV. It is for people who **do not** have HIV but may be at risk.

PrEP is recommended if you:

- Have an HIV-positive partner
- Have sex without condoms
- Have multiple partners
- Share needles
- Have had an STD recently

**PrEP works best when used with condoms**



## HIV TREATMENT (ART)

HIV is treated with Antiretroviral Therapy (ART).

- Lowers the amount of HIV in your body
- Protects your immune system
- Helps you live a long, healthy life
- Prevents passing HIV to others

## WHAT IS PEP?

PEP is medicine taken **after** possible HIV exposure.

- It must be started within **72 hours (3 days)**.
- PEP is for **emergencies only** and **does not replace condoms or PrEP**.



Staying in care and taking medicine every day is very important.

## HIV IS NOT SPREAD BY:

- ✗ Hugging or holding hands
- ✗ Kissing
- ✗ Sneezing or coughing
- ✗ Sweat or saliva
- ✗ Toilet seats or sharing food



## HOW CAN I PREVENT HIV?

- ✓ Getting tested regularly
- ✓ Using condoms every time you have sex
- ✓ Not sharing needles or syringes
- ✓ Taking **PrEP** if you are **HIV-negative**
- ✓ Taking **PEP** after **possible exposure**



## WHAT IS AIDS?

AIDS stands for **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**.

HIV can lead to AIDS if **not treated** since it badly damages the immune system.

**You cannot have AIDS without HIV**, but many people with HIV never develop AIDS because they take treatment.



# WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HIV?

Many people with HIV have **no symptoms for years**. That is why testing is so important.

Early symptoms may feel like the flu:

Fever

Tiredness

Rash

Swollen glands

Chills

Sore Throat

Muscle aches

These symptoms usually go away, but HIV can still spread.

## HIV SYMPTOMS IN WOMEN

Women may also experience:

- Changes in periods
- Lower belly pain
- Pain during sex
- Frequent yeast infections



These symptoms can have other causes, so **testing is the only way to know.**

## IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT HIV

- Once you have HIV, it stays in your body for life
- HIV medicine helps keep you healthy
- Treatment can lower HIV so much that it cannot be passed to others
- When HIV is **undetectable**, it cannot be transmitted during sex
- This is called **Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)**

## HOW DOES HIV SPREAD?

### HIV is found in:

- Semen (cum)
- Vaginal fluids
- Anal fluids
- Blood
- Breast milk

### You can get HIV from:

- Vaginal or anal sex without condoms
- Sharing needles or syringes
- Contact with infected blood through open cuts or sores
- Needle sticks with infected blood