

How to **detect HIV** in a person?

The only way to know whether a person has HIV is by taking an HIV test. A negative HIV test result provides access to prevention options, such as PrEP, while a positive result provides access to care and treatment options. Depending on the type of test used, HIV may be detected within a period ranging from fourteen (14) days to three (3) months after exposure.



- Law No. 45 of 2016 establishes HIV testing as a routine healthcare service in any clinical setting. People between the ages of 13 and 64 who are or have been sexually active should be tested at least once a year (during pregnancy – two tests, one during the first trimester and another during the last trimester).

Reference

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). Basic Information About HIV.

Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/spanish/basics/index.html>

Puerto Rico Department of Health. (2019). Puerto Rico Integrated HIV Surveillance, Prevention, and Treatment Plan.

Retrieved from: <http://www.salud.gov.pr/Dept-de-Salud/Documents/Inventario%20de%20Leyes%20vinculadas%20a%20VIH%20ITS%20TB%20VHC%202019.pdf>



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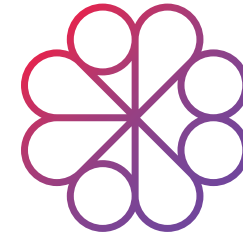
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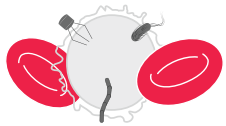


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HIV

What is the **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**?

It is a virus that attacks the immune system's CD4 cells. CD4 cells help protect the body against infections. If left untreated, HIV can cause **Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)**.



- **AIDS** is the advanced stage of HIV infection. It occurs when the immune system is severely weakened or when opportunistic or related illnesses have developed.

What are the **symptoms of HIV**?

A person who acquires HIV may not have symptoms immediately and may therefore be unaware that they have the virus.

During the first two to four weeks after HIV infection, the person may experience symptoms similar to those of other illnesses, such as:

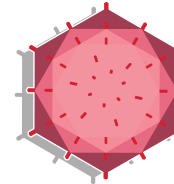
- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- General discomfort

HIV can be transmitted whether or not a person has symptoms, especially if they are not receiving treatment.

How is **HIV transmitted**?

People can acquire HIV through the exchange of bodily fluids with a person who has been diagnosed with HIV, including blood, semen, pre-seminal fluid, breast milk, and anal and vaginal secretions. This can occur mainly in the following ways:

- Through sexual activity without using an internal or external condom.
- Through sexual activity without using preventive treatments, such as **pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)**.
- By **sharing syringes** for injections of any kind, including drugs, steroids, vitamins, medications, or hormones.



How to **prevent HIV**?

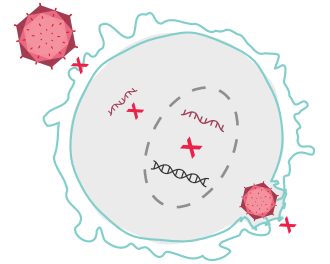
There are different strategies for preventing HIV, such as abstinence (not having sex), using condoms consistently and correctly, never sharing syringes, and using HIV prevention medication (PrEP).

People diagnosed with HIV can also prevent transmitting the virus if they achieve an undetectable viral load.

How is **HIV treated**?

HIV treatment helps people at all stages and can delay or prevent progression from one stage to another.

- HIV medication therapy is known as **antiretroviral therapy (ART)**. This treatment prolongs life, improves the health of many people living with HIV, and reduces the likelihood of transmitting the virus to their partners.



People who take treatment daily under medical supervision can achieve an **undetectable viral load**, reducing the risk of transmitting the virus to others.

- Viral suppression is achieved through **adherence**, which means taking the medication as directed by the doctor, at the correct dose and frequency.

{Illustration Note
The representations of HIV and ART, as well as their relative scales, are not accurate. }