

## Prevention

There are many ways to prevent AIDS. AIDS is mostly spread by sexual intercourse. You must have safe sex if you want to protect yourself from AIDS: -

- To have safe sex means to use a condom.
- Safe sex means having sex without penetration. This means that the penis does not enter the vagina or anus.
- It means you must have sex with only one partner.
- Your partner must only have sex with you too! This is a faithful relationship.
- Safe sex means having sex with your partner after you have both had an HIV test and found that you are both negative. You both then must only have sex with each other. This is also a faithful relationship.
- Abstinence.
- Environmental Health with help from other health institutions carryout AIDS Awareness Programmes.
- Environmental Health conducts health and hygiene promotion.
  - ◆ To promote usage of condoms.
  - ◆ To promote healthy lifestyles.
  - ◆ To promote safe sex.

## References:

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# AIDS

**A** ↔ **ACQUIRED**

**I** ↔ **IMMUNO**

**D** ↔ **DEFICIENCY**

**S** ↔ **SYNDROME**



## AIDS

### Definition:

AIDS is an acronym made up of the letters of the following words:

- A** - acquired: become affected from others.
- I** - immune: the body's ways of protecting itself against infection.
- D** - deficiency: lack
- S** - syndrome : collection of symptoms and diseases.

AIDS is a disease that breaks down a part of the body's immune system, leaving the person defenseless against a variety of illnesses that are normally not life threatening to people without AIDS.

## Introduction

AIDS is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). People can be infected with HIV for many years before they develop signs and symptoms of any illness. HIV \AIDS is among us, it is real. It is spreading rapidly. We can only win against it if we join hands to save our nation. For too long we have closed our eyes as a nation, hoping the truth was not so real. For many years, we have allowed HIV to spread, and the rate in our country which is one of the fastest in the world. Every single day a further 1 500 people in South Africa get infected. More than three million people have been infected.

As partners against HIV/AIDS, together we pledge to pool our resources and to commit our brainpower!

There is still no cure for HIV/AIDS. Nothing can prevent infection except our own behavior.

We shall work together to support medical institutions to search for a vaccine and a cure.

We shall mobilize all possible resources to spread the message of prevention, to offer support to those infected and affected, and to de-stigmatise HIV/AIDS.

And so today we join hands in the partnership, fully aware that our unity is our strength. The simple but practical action that we take today is tomorrow's insurance for our nation.

Together, as partners against HIV/AIDS, we can and shall win.

## Mode of Transmission

HIV enters the body in the following ways: -

- Sexual intercourse
  - Vaginal.
  - Oral (mouth with sores/bleeding gums).
  - Anal from: -
    - Male to female.
    - Female to male.
    - Male to male.
    - Female to female.
- An infected mother to her child; in the uterus or at birth.
- Blood transfusion with infected blood or

infected blood products..

- A contaminated needle;
- Infected tissue and organ transplant cutting object.
- Close physical contact with an infected person's blood (e.g. if such blood comes into contact with an open wounds or cut on "healthy" person's body).

## Early Signs of AIDS:

- Losing weight.
- Swelling in the neck, behind the ear, under the arm and in the groin.
- Sores in the lips, which do not heal.
- Thrush - a white rash inside the mouth or in the private parts.
- Signs of TB –cough and sweating.
- Fever and sweating at night.
- Diarrhea that does not stop.

## Late signs of AIDS:

- ◆ TB.
- ◆ Pneumonia.
- ◆ Painful rashes.
- ◆ Weakness and tiredness.
- ◆ Dark blue marks on the skin.
- ◆ Losing a lot of weight.
- ◆ Headaches, fits, blackouts, loss of memory and difficulty in concentrating.

