

What is HIV?

HIV is a virus that gradually attacks the immune system, which is our body's natural defence against illness. If a person becomes infected with HIV, they will find it harder to fight off infections and diseases.

Symptoms

Within 2-4 weeks after exposure to HIV, many, but not all people who are infected experience flu-like symptoms, often described as the "worst flu ever." Many HIV+ people do not have symptoms, they don't look or feel sick, often people only begin to feel sick when they progress towards AIDS. If you think you may have been exposed to HIV- Regardless of whether you have experienced any symptoms. **It is important to get tested ASAP.**

- Fever
- Swollen glands
- Sore throat
- Rash
- Fatigue
- Muscle & Joint pains
- Headache

How it spreads

- Sexual contact
- Injection drug use
- Pregnancy, Childbirth, Breast Feeding
- Occupational Exposure
- Blood Transfusion/Organ Transplant

How it does not spread

- By working with or being around someone with HIV
- Sweat, spit, tears, clothes, drinking fountains, phones, toilet seats, or through sharing meals
- From mosquito bites, other insects bites or stings
- From donating blood
- From a closed-mouth kiss

Prevention method

- Using a new condom every time you have sex
- Telling your sexual partners if you have HIV
- Using clean needles
- HIV testing, counseling and linkage to care
- Prevention programs for people living with HIV
- Substance abuse treatment
- Screening and treatment for other sexually transmitted infections

What is AIDS?

AIDS is a fatal disease, caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, in which the patient's immunity gradually decreases, and eventually the immune system is destroyed. This causes the patient to easily fall prey to other diseases.

Free HIV testing & info

VCT

501-824-3129

Free HIV testing and counseling behind the San Ignacio Hospital

Belize Family Life Association

501-824-3571

Free HIV testing and counseling across from Sacred Heart Church

Cornerstone Foundation

501-667-0210

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