



Fact Sheet

2005

Student Health Services Texas A&M University

HIV/AIDS

Get the facts about HIV/AIDS

- **HIV** is the virus that causes **AIDS**, a disease that destroys the body's ability to fight off infections.
- There is no cure for HIV or AIDS.
- AIDS is usually fatal.
- People become infected with HIV because of what they do, **not who they are**.
- There are only a few ways you can become infected with HIV.
- You can protect yourself from becoming infected with HIV.
- A blood test can show if you have been infected with HIV. The test is confidential.
- If you are infected with HIV, there are things you can do to stay healthy.

What are HIV & AIDS?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes **AIDS** (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). HIV damages the immune system, the part of the body that fights infection. Eventually, the immune system becomes so weak that diseases and infections begin to attack the body. As these conditions worsen, a person is diagnosed with AIDS.

How can you tell if someone is infected with HIV?

You cannot tell if someone has HIV or AIDS by looking at them. A person infected with HIV may look healthy and feel fine, but they can still pass the virus to you. A blood test is the only way a person can find out if he or she is infected with HIV.

Anyone can become infected with HIV. It has nothing to do with race, age, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation. People get infected with HIV because of what they do, not who they are.

How do you get infected with HIV?

- HIV is spread through blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk. Contact with these body fluids puts you at risk for HIV infection.
- The most common ways people are infected with HIV are:
 - Having sex (anal, vaginal, or oral) with someone who is infected with HIV, and
 - Sharing needles or syringes with someone who is infected. This includes sharing needles to shoot drugs or vitamins, to pierce body parts, or for tattoos.
- A woman with HIV infection can pass the virus to her baby during pregnancy or at birth. A few babies have also been infected by breast-feeding from their infected mother.
- Although all donated blood has been screened for HIV since 1985, some people got the virus by receiving HIV-infected blood products between 1978 and 1985. You cannot get HIV by giving blood.

How you WON'T get infected with HIV.

You cannot get HIV through the air or from casual contact. HIV is not spread by:

- Living, working, or going to school with someone with HIV infection
- Shaking hands, hugging, or kissing
- Sneezing or coughing
- Sharing food, plates, cups or forks
- Toilets, tubs, or swimming pools
- Mosquitoes or other insects

How can you prevent the spread of HIV?

- **Abstinence** from anal, vaginal and oral sex is the only sure way to avoid getting HIV through sexual contact.
- **Don't share needles and syringes** for drugs, steroids, tattoos, or anything else.
- **If you choose to have sex, use a latex condom every time** - When used correctly, condoms can help prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI's).
- **Stay with one partner** who has sex only with you and always use condoms.

Should I get an HIV test?

You should think about being tested for HIV if you have:

- Had multiple sex partners, male or female (the more partners you have, the greater the risk)
- Had sex without a condom (anal, vaginal, or oral) with a person whose HIV status you do not know
- Had sex with a prostitute (male or female)
- Shared needles or syringes
- Received blood products between 1978 and 1985
- Had sex with anyone who has done any of these things.

Why should I take the test?

If you are infected with HIV, there are things you can do to stay healthy. Research shows that early treatment can help delay the onset of AIDS. You can also take steps to avoid infecting other people with HIV.

If you are pregnant and infected with HIV, there are medicines you can take to reduce your baby's risk of getting HIV.

Where can I get an HIV test?

[Student Health Services](#) will provide you with an HIV test for a charge. This test is confidential and will go in your medical record. For a free, anonymous HIV test performed by AIDS Services of the Brazos Valley, contact Health Education at 458-8322. AIDS Services comes to A.P. Beutel every other Tuesday afternoon from 12:30pm – 3pm.

Call these free numbers to get more information on HIV/AIDS:

Texas HIV/STD Infoline

1-800-299-AIDS (2437)
1-800-299-2437 (en Español)

1-800-252-8012 (TDD/TTY)

National AIDS Hotline

1-800-342-AIDS (2437)

1-800-344-SIDA (en Español)

Drug Abuse Hotline

1-800-662-HELP

National AIDS Information Clearinghouse

1-800-458-5231

Local Sources for HIV/AIDS information:

AIDS Services of Brazos Valley

979-260-AIDS (2437)

Bryan, Texas

[AIDS Services of Brazos Valley](#)

Brazos County Health Department

979-361-4450

Bryan, Texas

<http://www.brazoshealth.org/>

Health Education, A.P. Beutel Student Health Center

979-458-8322

Campus of Texas A&M University

<http://healthed.tamu.edu>

Information Obtained from Texas Department of Health