HIV Infection and AIDS
(caused by human immunodeficiency virus or HIV)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Early (weeks to months after exposure):
• Flu-like illness
• Swollen lymph nodes

Late (years after exposure):
• Persistent fevers
• Night sweats
• Prolonged diarrhea
• Unexplained weight loss
• Purple bumps on skin or inside mouth and nose
• Chronic fatigue
• Swollen lymph nodes
• Recurrent respiratory infections

Note: These symptoms are not specific for HIV and may have other causes. Most persons with HIV have no symptoms at all for several years.

TRANSMISSION

HIV is spread by:
• Vaginal sex
• Oral sex
• Anal sex
• Sharing needles to inject drugs, body piercing or tattooing
• Contaminated blood products (rare)
• Infected mother to newborn at birth or through breastfeeding

HIV infection cannot be spread by:
• Shaking hands
• A social kiss
• Cups
• Animals
• Hugging
• Swimming pools
• Toilet seats
• Food
• Insects
• Coughing

COMPLICATIONS

• HIV can spread to sex partners and persons sharing needles.
• There is no cure for HIV and without treatment most people eventually die from the disease.

HIV/AIDS and pregnancy
• HIV can be passed to unborn children from infected mother during pregnancy or childbirth.
• Infected mother may infect infant through breast milk.

PREVENTION

• Avoiding vaginal, oral or anal sex is the best way to prevent STDs.
• Limit the number of sex partners.
• Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing the transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.
• Always use latex condoms during vaginal and anal sex.
• Use a latex condom for oral sex on a penis.
• Use a latex barrier (dental dam or condom cut in half) for oral sex on a vagina or anus.
• Limit or avoid use of drugs and alcohol.
• Don’t share drug needles, cotton or cookers.
• Don’t share needles for tattooing or piercing.
• Notify sex and needle-sharing partners immediately if HIV-infected.

TESTING AND TREATMENT

• Tests are available to detect antibodies for HIV through physicians, STD clinics, and HIV counseling and testing sites.
• There is no cure for HIV/AIDS.
• Early diagnosis and treatment can prolong life for years.
• Medications and treatments are available to keep immune system working.
• Medications are available to treat AIDS-related illnesses.
• Medications are available for HIV infected pregnant women to greatly reduce the chance of infection of newborn.
• There are experimental drug trials testing new medications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Minnesota Department of Health
STD and HIV Section
(651) 201-5414; (651) 201-5797 TTY
www.health.state.mn.us/hiv

Minnesota AIDS Project AIDSLine
(612) 373-AIDS (Metro)
1-800-248-AIDS (State)
(612) 373-2465 TTY (Metro)
1-888-820-2437 TTY (State)
www.mnaidsproject.org

American Social Health Association (ASHA)
www.ashastd.org

CDC National STD and AIDS Hotlines
1-800-CDC-INFO; 1-888-232-6348 TTY
www.cdc.gov/hiv

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