



### Why Gay Men Are at Risk for HIV/AIDS

Stories in the news about treatments for HIV/AIDS have made people forget how deadly it is. There is still no cure for HIV/AIDS.

There are drugs that can treat some of the effects of HIV/AIDS. These drugs allow an infected person to live a longer, less painful life. This has led younger gay men to take more risks with their health.

Young gay men may have never seen one of their friends die from AIDS thanks to these drugs. But the drugs are very expensive. A person making an average income might not be able to afford them, and insurance companies might not cover treatment.

You need to know the signs of HIV/AIDS, and how to avoid getting this deadly disease.



### Gay Men Are Still at Risk for HIV/AIDS

AIDS, or the Acquired Immune Deficiency Sndrome, was once thought to be a disease that only affected gay men. We now know this is not true. The virus that causes AIDS, known as HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), affects everyone regardless of their race, gender or sexual orientation.

But gay men are still at the greatest risk of getting HIV/AIDS. Almost half of all AIDS cases involve men who have sex with men.

#### Facts About HIV/AIDS

[www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/facts](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/facts)

*still a threat*



#### For More Information

Go to [www.intheknowzone.com](http://www.intheknowzone.com) for an extension of this pamphlet. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links.

Test your understanding with a quick quiz.



National STI Hotline:  
(800) 227-8922

**Don't stay in the dark.**

**Get In the Know!**

**in the know**

© 2002 SYNDISTAR, INC.  
5801 River Road  
New Orleans, LA 70123-5106

800-841-9532 • [www.syndistar.com](http://www.syndistar.com) • product #PB-PS48  
This pamphlet may not be copied.

# HIV and AIDS

*why you are still at risk*





## Six Facts About How HIV/AIDS is Spread

- Blood, semen and saliva all can spread HIV, as can a woman's vaginal fluid
- Blood and semen carry larger quantities of the virus than saliva or vaginal fluid
- Sex without a condom is the most common way HIV is spread
- Anal sex is the easiest way to spread HIV, because semen can pass easily into the bloodstream through the anus
- Sharing needles for tattooing or drug use can spread HIV
- Any contact with infected blood, semen or saliva can spread the virus. This is why health care workers wear protective gloves and clothing



### How HIV/AIDS is Spread

[www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/transmission](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/transmission)

## Three Stages of Infection

**Stage 1:** HIV weakens your body's immune system, which is how your body fights illnesses and infections. There are no outward signs or symptoms in stage one, only a test can detect the HIV virus.

**Stage 2:** Symptoms of infection begin to show, including:

- Swelling of the lymph glands, found in the neck, armpits, and back of mouth
- Feeling very tired all the time
- Weight loss for no reason
- Continuing fever
- Diarrhea for several days

**Stage 3:** This is when HIV becomes AIDS. The infected person still has the symptoms of stage two, and their immune system is completely destroyed.

Any illness or disease could be fatal to someone at this stage, even a common cold. The most common *opportunistic infections* are pneumonia and a type of cancer known as "Kaposi's sarcoma."

HIV can also attack the brain. It's not uncommon for AIDS patients to suffer from memory loss, poor judgement, personality changes, dementia and brain tumors.

### Signs/Symptoms of HIV/AIDS

[www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/symptoms](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/symptoms)



## Treatment

HIV/AIDS has no cure. Several drugs can either slow the spread of the virus, or decrease the force of attack from opportunistic infections. AZT (zidovudine) is the most common medicine used to fight HIV. AZT's common brand name is *Retrovir*.

### Prevention of HIV/AIDS

[www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/prevention](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/prevention)

## How You Can Avoid Getting HIV/AIDS

Avoiding sexual contact and needles is the best way to prevent infection. Using a condom can help prevent the spread of HIV, but it is not 100% effective. Sex without a condom is only safe when you and your uninfected partner only have sex with each other.



## Follow These Tips to Avoid HIV

- Get to know your partner before having sexual contact
- Wear a condom for all types of sexual contact — vaginal, oral or anal
- Never share needles
- Don't do drugs
- Make decisions about having sex when sober. Alcohol and drugs affect your ability to make sound decisions
- Get tested by a doctor or at a medical clinic at least once a year



Medical testing of HIV is the only way to be sure you are not infected. Share your concerns about getting tested with your partner. He will thank you for it.

### More on HIV/AIDS Testing

[www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/testing](http://www.intheknowzone.com/hiv/testing)

get tested

