

## Why is HIV/AIDS important?

HIV/AIDS is a disease that has already killed millions of people worldwide. There is no cure for this disease. Everyone can get it if they do not know how to protect themselves. Therefore it is important to know the basic facts about HIV/AIDS.

## What is HIV?

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that enters the body when a person is infected. Once inside the body the HIV virus then damages your immune system. This means that the infected body is completely exposed and defenceless against bacterial, viral and other infections, and all the diseases that are caused by such exposure.

The Status of an infected person is called “HIV+” or “HIV positive”. A person can live with this status for several years, but needs regular medical treatment and a good diet.

## What is AIDS

Over the years, HIV positive patients become ill more and more often. The body weakens until the immune system breaks down completely. This last phase of the disease is called AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).



At this stage, the body has very little defence against any sort of disease. Any infection can lead to the death of the patient.

## How is HIV passed on?

The HIV-virus is found in the blood and sexual fluids of infected persons. The disease is passed on through:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal and oral);
- From an HIV positive mother to her child during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding;
- From drug user to drug user when sharing the same needle for injecting drugs;
- Through contact with an infected person's blood in a blood transfusion.

## How can I protect myself?

- Always use a condom during sexual intercourse;
- Undergo HIV tests, preferable with your sexual partner;
- Avoid having many sexual partners;
- Do not have unprotected sexual intercourse with partners whose health status you do not know;
- Only use your own hygiene materials such as razor or toothbrush;
- Avoid contact with the blood, semen or vaginal secretions of unknown persons;
- If you are injecting drugs into your body, always use sterile needles.

## Pregnancy and HIV/AIDS

- If you are pregnant ask your doctor about HIV testing;
- A pregnant woman who is HIV positive has the possibility to terminate her pregnancy during the first three months;
- If you are HIV positive and pregnant ask your doctor for the right medical treatment to considerably reduce the risk of passing on the infection to your child;
- New-born babies must not be breast fed by HIV positive mothers.



## When is HIV not passed on?

If you know an infected person, do not be afraid to continue your normal social contacts with him/her.

HIV/AIDS can not be passed on through:

- Regular contact with an infected person;
- Social kissing, hugging, shaking hands;
- Sharing the same drinking glasses, plates or cutlery;
- Using public pool, toilet or sauna with an infected person;
- Through insect bites;
- HIV is not transmitted by air or water.

## When do I need an HIV test?

It is recommended that you know your HIV status and that of your partner before you have unprotected sexual intercourse.

The HIV test is designed to detect HIV antibodies in human blood. However, they will only be detected three months after the infection.

You have to undergo an HIV test:

- If you have had unprotected sexual intercourse with an unknown partner;
- If you used a non-sterile needle when injecting drugs into your body.

## Why must I know my HIV status?

- Knowing your HIV status will help you to start life saving medical treatment as early as possible.
- It will also prevent you from infecting others unknowingly.
- If you know your status and infect another person intentionally with HIV this is a criminal act in Slovakia.

## Where can I have an HIV test?

In Slovakia, tests for HIV antibodies are available to everyone. Confidentiality is guaranteed by law. Only you and your doctor will know the results. At your request you may also be examined in an asylum centre.

If the test shows that you are infected with HIV it is strongly recommended that you talk to your doctor about medical treatment and undergo the prescribed medical treatment. It may prevent you from quickly developing AIDS and may improve the quality of your life.

## Free and anonymous blood tests

### Bratislava

National Reference Centre for HIV/AIDS  
Limbová 14, Kramáre Hospital  
RNDr. Staneková  
Tel. 02/ 5936 9174

### Banská Bystrica

Regional Public Health Office  
Cesta k nemocnici 1, Old premises of the Roosevelt Hospital  
MUDr. Lokša  
Tel. 048/415 42 26

### Košice

Regional Public Health Office  
Senný trh 4, near to the bus station;  
MUDr. Masica  
Tel. 055/ 622 18 13

**Remember, if you are HIV positive,  
medical treatment prolongs life.**

**MIGRAČNÝ ÚRAD**  
Ministerstva vnútra SR



**Protect yourself  
from HIV/AIDS**



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