



HIV/AIDS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS

AND WHAT'S SAFE

INFORMATION FOR MEN

AIDS IS A DANGEROUS DISEASE... and it is still incurable. AIDS has spread all over the world, and it is also a serious problem in Switzerland.

AIDS is the result of an infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (known as **HIV**). If you are infected with HIV, your immune system – the body's ability to defend itself against disease – weakens over the years. There comes a time when your body is no longer able to fight off many illnesses. You get sick, then sicker. This condition is what we call AIDS.

PROTECTION: This leaflet shows you where you are at risk of becoming infected with HIV. And how you and your partner(s) can protect yourselves effectively against HIV/Aids!

AIDS IS INCURABLE... but there are medicines which slow down the course of an HIV infection. In Switzerland, everybody – no matter what their residence status – has the right to effective medical treatment. HIV treatment works best when it is started at the right time. If you don't know you are infected, you miss the best time to begin. So it's important to find out whether you are infected with HIV or not. For more information see overleaf.



RISKS

HIV is transmitted during sexual contact without a condom. A condom gives you the best protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases in any sexual contact.

ANAL SEX WITHOUT A CONDOM



●●● Very high risk

for both partners, with or without ejaculation

■ Protect yourself:

Use a condom and enough lubricant



VAGINAL SEX WITHOUT A CONDOM



●●○ High risk

for men and women, with or without ejaculation

■ **Protect yourself:** Use a condom

ORAL SEX WITHOUT PROTECTION



●○○ Potential risk

■ **Protect yourself:** Avoid having oral sex with a woman during her period.

Avoid semen in your mouth!

Avoid swallowing semen!

USING A CONDOM

1. Make sure the package is intact.



2. Open the package carefully by tearing along the perforated line; take the condom out.

3. Pull back the foreskin (unless you are circumcised).



4. Hold the rolled up condom by the reservoir end between your thumb and index finger and place it on the tip of the erect penis. The ring at the base of the condom should be on the outside.



5. Unroll the condom over the penis. It should unroll smoothly and easily. If there is any difficulty, the condom is probably too big or too small, or you've put it on the wrong way round (with the ring on the inside).



6. After ejaculating, hold the condom firmly at the base so that it doesn't slip off and pull out before the penis softens.

NOTE... There is also a female condom (Femidom[®]), which is inserted in the vagina before sexual intercourse. However, the male condom is simpler to use and cheaper.

OTHER MEANS OF TRANSMITTING HIV

FROM AN INFECTED MOTHER TO HER CHILD



An infected mother can pass HIV on to her child during pregnancy, labour and delivery or breastfeeding.

●●● Very high risk

■ **Protection:** if a pregnant woman has tested positive for HIV, certain medical steps can be taken to prevent the infection being transmitted to her child.

INJECTING DRUGS



HIV can be transmitted by drug users sharing syringes and needles.

●●● Very high risk

■ **Protect yourself:** Use sterile injecting equipment (syringes, needles, filters, cotton wool, spoon, water); don't share injecting equipment with other users. If you don't take these precautions, you additionally run a high risk of getting infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV), which is also very dangerous.

SURGERY / CIRCUMCISIONS

●●● Very high risk

If the equipment (syringe, knife, needle...) used in surgery and in circumcisions, tattooing, etc. is not sterile and is used on different people, there is a chance that HIV may be transmitted. HIV can also be transmitted through a blood transfusion if the blood has not been screened.

○○○ No risk

In Switzerland, there are no cases of HIV being transmitted through surgical treatment carried out by recognised medical practitioners.

NO RISK FROM



Using workplace toilets and washrooms



Sneezing, coughing



Shaking hands, stroking
Hugging



Eating from the same plate
Drinking from the same glass



Insect bites
Swimming pools, saunas

This list shows that there is **no risk of transmitting or becoming infected with HIV in everyday contact**. There is no reason to be afraid of people infected with HIV/Aids or to exclude them from society.

No risk either from:



Kissing or mutual masturbation
Protected sex (with a condom)

OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Apart from HIV/AIDS, sexual intercourse can result in the transmission of other diseases, e.g. gonorrhoea, herpes, syphilis, chlamydia or hepatitis B.

SYMPTOMS AND COMPLAINTS - → SEE A DOCTOR!

These diseases often cause certain complaints:

- Discharge from the penis (urethra) in unusual amount and colour
- Burning sensation when urinating, itching in the urethra area
- Pain and swelling in the testicles
- Sores, small blisters, ulcerations, rashes and itching in the genital area
- Pains in the lower abdomen
- Problems with bowel movements
- Dull pain in the rectum, discharge from the rectum
- Ulcerations, small blisters on the anus

If you have any of these symptoms, go to the doctor immediately!

Note: HIV infection does not cause these symptoms! The only way to find out if you are infected is to go for a test.

CONSEQUENCES

If recognised in time, many of these diseases can be cured. Left untreated, they can have severe consequences (e.g. cancer, infertility), and they seriously increase the risk of becoming infected with HIV.

PROTECT YOURSELF: BY USING A CONDOM

A condom gives the best protection from these diseases during vaginal and anal intercourse, as well as for oral sex.

It is particularly important to use a condom if you have oral sex with a prostitute.

INFORMATION ON CONDOMS AND LUBRICANTS

PROTECTION:

Condoms give you protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. They can also be used to prevent pregnancy.

GOOD QUALITY CONDOMS/FINDING THE RIGHT SIZE

Only use condoms with the «ok» quality label, available in supermarkets, drugstores and pharmacies.



Condoms come in different sizes and styles. Make sure you find the one that fits you best. If they're too small, they may burst or tear; if they're too big, they may slip off. To find the right size, you can also look on the Internet under: www.mysize.ch

EXPIRY DATE/STORING CONDOMS

Do not use condoms which have passed their expiry date (see date on package). – Keep condoms away from direct light and sharp objects.

LUBRICANTS

If necessary, use generous amounts of water-based lubricant (gel which makes penetration easier), available in supermarkets, drugstores and pharmacies. Never use Vaseline, body lotion, massage oil or cooking oil.

Never use two condoms at the same time, one on top of the other!

WHAT CAN I DO IF...

a condom bursts or tears and my partner is definitely or very likely HIV positive? If you go to an AIDS support organisation or a hospital the very next day at the latest, specialists can tell you what you can do. There is a real chance of stopping the infection, but there is no simple, guaranteed treatment in this situation.

BE RESPONSIBLE!

Using a condom for sexual intercourse is a must. The condom protects both you and the people you have sex with. Please take your responsibility towards yourself and your partner(s) seriously – always carry condoms with you and use them every time you have sex!

If you don't use a condom and take the risk of infecting your partner with HIV, you can be prosecuted and may be sentenced to several years in prison!

NOTE

If you have always had sex without a condom and haven't become infected, then you have just been incredibly lucky. **There is still a very high risk of infection every time you have sexual intercourse without a condom!**

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITHOUT A CONDOM IS ONLY SAFE UNDER ALL THREE OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- You are in a long-term relationship
- You and your partner have sex only with each other
- You have both had an HIV test (preferably together), which shows that you are not infected with the HIV virus

Is this the situation in your case? Are you absolutely sure?

MORE INFORMATION AND COUNSELLING

COUNSELLING

At any AIDS support organisation: Call or drop in. If you want, you can receive counselling without having to give your name.

From a doctor: Don't hesitate to ask a doctor questions about HIV/Aids. Doctors are bound to observe confidentiality.

Doctors and their assistants are not allowed to pass on information about what you say or the results of an examination to anybody at all – including your partner, the immigration authorities, your employer, asylum reception/transit centre staff, community home staff, prison staff, etc.

LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

Find out the languages in which counselling is available. You may have to bring with you someone who can translate/interpret for you. (Information on suitable translators/interpreters under www.eka-cfe.ch/d/Doku/vermittlungsstellen.pdf or from an AIDS support organisation)

MORE INFORMATION

Copies of this leaflet or other leaflets are available from:

Swiss AIDS Federation, Postfach 1118, 8031 Zurich

To order: phone 044 447 11 13, fax 044 447 11 14, e-mail shop@aids.ch, or go to www.shop.aids.ch

For other information: phone 044 447 11 11, fax 044 447 11 12, e-mail aids@aids.ch, or go to www.aids.ch

Ask an AIDS support organisation for information leaflets in your language, or go to **www.migesplus.ch**.

This leaflet is available in the following languages:

albanisch, albanais, albanese, Albanian	russisch, russe, russo, Russian
amharisch, amharique, amarico, Amharic	serbisch/kroatisch/bosnisch, serbe/croate/bosniaque,
arabisch, arabe, arabo, Arabic	serbo/croato/bosniaco, Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian
deutsch, allemand, tedesco, German	somalisch, somalien, somalo, Somali
englisch, anglais, inglese, English	spanisch, espagnol, spagnolo, Spanish
französisch, français, francese, French	suaheli, swahili, swahili, Swahili
italienisch, italien, italiano, Italian	tamilisch, tamoul, tamil, Tamil
portugiesisch, portugais, portuguese, Portuguese	thai, thai, thai, Thai
rumänisch, roumain, rumeno, Romanian	türkisch, turc, turco, Turkish

HAVE I BECOME INFECTED?

If you don't find out that you are infected with HIV early enough, you miss the best time to start HIV treatment.

HIV TEST

You can only find out if you have become infected with HIV by taking an HIV test. At the beginning of an HIV infection, there may be no symptoms or health problems at all. There are no clear indications of an early HIV infection. You can't tell if someone has recently become infected just from looking at them.

As a rule, you should get tested three months after your last exposure to risk (e.g. sexual intercourse without a condom). This three-month 'window period' is always necessary to obtain a reliable result. But if you are infected with HIV, you can pass the virus on to other people even during these three months.

If the test result is «HIV negative», you have not become infected with the virus that causes AIDS. If the result is «HIV positive», it means that you have an HIV infection.

NOBODY NEEDS TO KNOW

You can take the test in major hospitals or directly in laboratories without having to give your name. This means that nobody can find out if you have gone to get tested or what the result is.

COUNSELLING BEFORE THE TEST

Before you go for the test, be sure to seek counselling at an AIDS support organisation, hospital or laboratory, or from your doctor. Or talk to your asylum case worker.

For (anonymous) information on addresses, fact sheets, test centres, etc. and to order materials, contact: **044 447 11 11/**www.aids.ch

Or directly at: